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THE STRUGGLE
FOR
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
IN GERMANY

by

A. S. DUNCAN-JONES

Dean of Chichester



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To

GROSSDEUTSCHLAND

—That “Greater Germany” to which belong Luther, Leibnitz, and Kant; Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart; Goethe, Lessing, and Heine; Zinzendorf, Strossmayer, and Döllinger; von Humboldt, Ranke, and Mommsen; and many another in whom the spirit of Germany has acted as a beacon to men of other lands and other traditions, because it has drawn its power from sources that transcend race and that know no physical frontiers—this study is dedicated in the sure confidence that that spirit will one day break the tyranny that oppresses it, and give to mankind the riches that belong to it in the Divine Economy

Grüss Gott!

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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PREFACE

IF ANYONE HAD prophesied in March 1933 that in March 1938 the strife between Church and State in Germany, of which the first signs had already appeared, would still be in full blast, most foreign observers would have regarded it as the utterance of a disordered brain. The reason for this surprise would doubtless have been that at that date very few foreigners had read *Mein Kampf*, or *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Had they done so, and had they been able to persuade themselves that vast numbers of one of the most highly educated peoples of the world would in a very short space of time come to regard these strange effusions as possessing almost the character of Divine oracles, they might have anticipated that during these five years there would have been no less than 7,000 cases—the figures are vouched for by Dr. Kerrl—in which representatives of the two great Churches of Germany have been charged by the police with an offence against the Government. Even so they might have found it hard to credit the fact that the cases would be pretty evenly distributed between the two Churches. And yet, a more serious attention to what these two books implied, rather than what they directly said, should have made it clear that now that their authors had achieved supreme power, that power must inevitably be relentlessly used to impose on the soul of the great German people a racial mysticism which flies in the face of reason, and knows neither justice nor mercy. In the last resort, when violence had removed every political, economic, and material obstacle, there would—as the racial mystics clearly perceived—be left one opponent that violence cannot subdue, because it is itself a mysticism claiming the totality of man's loyalty. That opponent is the faith that Protestants and Catholics hold in

PREFACE

common, the faith that for two thousand years had in the Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ provided the ordinary man with his principal guarantee that reason, justice, and mercy ultimately prevail in a universe full of obscurity and cruelty.

In the following pages I have tried to tell the story of the struggle for religious liberty in Germany during the last five years. I believe that struggle to be one of the most important moral phenomena of the day, and therefore worthy of the consideration of thoughtful people in all countries. If anyone, who does me the honour of reading what I have written, complains that the book is nothing but theology and ecclesiastical controversy, I would point out that these things are the essence of the matter. The fact that this is so may have a lesson for all of us.

I have tried to make the high argument as plain as possible, and to tell it as it unrolled itself—so far as may be in the words of the champions of either side, with the minimum of comment from myself. I make no pretence to be free from bias. The fact that there have been mistakes on both sides, and that on both sides there is evidence of ideals, does not—in my view—absolve us from trying the spirits. There are false prophets as well as true. Sincerity is admirable; but truth is vital. But even those who find the faith of the Christians remote from their own experience may feel that it is better to side with the oppressed in conscience rather than with the oppressor, and may be glad to be better acquainted with a story that, beneath the forest of detail, draws its inspiration from the deepest wells of the human spirit.

I could not have written an account I feel to be most inadequate for so great a theme without the help of many friends—too many to name—who during these years have supplied me with information often hard to come by. But there is one person without whose help it would never have got into print whom I must thank, and that is my daughter Mary.

A.S.D.J.

The Deanery, Chichester.

May 7, 1938.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHURCHES AND THE REVOLUTION

Every nation represents a thought of God; it exists by Divine decree; and therefore every nation needs its own religion.

LAGARDE

The Origins of National Socialism

THE ESSENCE OF the National Socialist movement is the ardent desire of the German people to live its own life. For centuries that desire has been fermenting and struggling to find expression. Just because politically it has been so hard to achieve national unity, German patriotism has taken to itself a religious colouring, a process made all the easier by the strong vein of mysticism that lies deep in the heart of the German people. In Luther the Christian religion expressed itself in a specifically Germanic form, with the result that whenever Germanism has in later ages found a new voice, it has tended to claim that it was Christian because Luther was a great Christian figure. German patriotism has come into its own largely through a struggle with French ideas or French political power, and the resistance has been regarded as a conflict between Christianity and unbelief,

*Hier liegt ein Christ und Patriot
Der Wahrheit treu, bis in den Tod
Mit Licht und Recht in seiner Hand
Stritt er für Gott und Vaterland*

This is the epitaph that Friedrich Carl Moser, the champion of German freedom, wrote for his father at the

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end of the eighteenth century. Two powerful philosophic influences helped to invest nationalism with a religious aura. Hegel taught that the State is the highest object of human good, the way of God in the world, by union with which the human being discovers his true freedom. Johann Gottlob Fichte opened up an even more penetrating conception in the "Addresses to the German Nation". He shifted the emphasis from the State to the Nation, from the political organism to the experience of community. He affirmed the unique creative value of the German people, the decisive factor in the development of humanity. The German *Volk* is a Divine revelation because it is God's method for putting its members in touch with eternity. The religious note in both these philosophers is most marked. It was only by appealing to these profoundest depths that it would be possible to build up a German people strong enough to endure the sacrifices necessary to throw off French hegemony and win its place in the world. It was an appeal that took but little account of the teaching of the New Testament, and ignored the existence of the Christian Church.

The classical example of the identification of German patriotism with Christianity is Schleiermacher, whose sermons at the *Dreifaltigkeit Kirche* between the years 1808 and 1815 were one of the greatest influences in the Prussian resistance to Napoleon. It is noteworthy that, after the war was won, Schleiermacher was also a prime mover in the movement for uniting the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, and not less noteworthy is it that the union that he wanted was a free union. He fell from favour because he was opposed to the imposition by the State of a merely legal union. All through the nineteenth century the alliance between patriotism and Lutheran Christianity was assumed; Bismarck was its exemplar; and the union of Church and State its natural expression. All appointments to office were ultimately State-made; the clergy were a department of the bureaucracy, and they had very little freedom to express opinions about anything except the

narrowest theological problems; with the result that in the period just before the war the fire of religion burnt low in the Protestant Church in Germany. The decay of religion was assisted by another influence. For a hundred years strongly rationalistic influences had been increasingly dominant in the theological faculties at the universities. There was indeed a positive school of thought whose orthodoxy was of a somewhat dry order. But many of the most able teachers were devoted to a criticism of the Gospels and the New Testament generally, which was out of sympathy with any supernatural conceptions, purely academic in its interest, and entirely destructive in its results. In spite of the great influence of men like Harnack, Church history ceased to attract students, because the idea of the Church itself as a Divine institution seemed to have become something remote and alien. There was genuine religious life here and there among individuals, and in social works inspired by a Christian faith. But, as Dr. Otto Piper has said in his *Recent Developments in German Protestantism*, "Protestant theology was without a real theological basis, without connection with active Church life, and in social isolation". A Church thus desiccated was unable to make much headway against the materialism of science and the lawless naturalism that had taken possession of German literature. The Catholic Church was less weakened by these influences. It had emerged victorious from its conflict with the State in Bismarck's time. In self-defence it had to hold fast to its special *Weltanschauung* in order to preserve the limited power that it had won for itself.

The war worked a more profound revolution in the spiritual and religious life of Germany than in any of the victor countries. Its effects in this realm went far deeper than in the political or economic sphere, though the political changes and financial loss, consequent on defeat, greatly assisted the travail of soul wrought by four years of conflict against a ring of enemies. A remarkable contrast is to be observed between the effect of the war on Germany

and that wrought on the conquering nations. Whereas in the victorious lands, specially in England, the years of carnage led to a radical questioning of the validity of nationalism as a dominant creed, in Germany exactly the opposite took place. There must be something wonderful, Germans said, in a race that had been able to hold out so long against such frightful odds. When for four years Germans were cut off from the rest of the world, they seemed to themselves to have found in their own mentality rich resources. They must make sure that these were now used to the full. The defeat could only be wiped out by a devotion to Germanism as complete as had been demanded of the soldiers in the war. They had not lost the war because they had been too German, but because they had not been German enough. The whole experience had been so smashing that, after the war, the German mind turned to apocalyptic conceptions. A shattered world in which all settled and rational order had fallen into ruins could only be rebuilt by heroic faith. The natural world had failed. Only a will endowed with supernatural light—and ready for all sacrifices—was of any avail. Reason and human science had been set at defiance and crumpled up like paper. The powers of evil could not be met by argument, but only by men of heroic stamp who are prepared to stand together in a ceaseless warfare which draws its resources from beyond.

The catastrophe that had overtaken the external fabric of Germany made large numbers of Germans turn to philosophy as a consolation. But it must be a philosophy related to life, and embodied in such a way as to take on the character of a religion and to provide a discipline. Thus Count Keyserling suddenly found himself a prophet. The *Travel Diary*, which attempted to blend the timeless meditation of the East with the vigour of the Christian West, was eagerly read, and led to the formation of a School of Wisdom at Darmstadt. Rudolph Steiner won many disciples for his peculiar brand of theosophy, which claimed to open mysteries that are the key of practical

living. His School of Spiritual Science was opened at Dornach in 1913. But it was only after the war that he made a wide appeal, partly because of his occultism, but even more because he attempted to bring spiritual conceptions to bear on economic problems.

Perhaps the most significant post-War spiritual influence in Germany was the work of Oswald Spengler. In his *Decline of Western Civilisation* he surveyed the whole of history in the way that delights the German mind. The declaration that Western civilisation is the latest but not the last of the recurring cycles into which history is divided appealed to the pessimism induced by defeat. It was flattering to German pride to believe that the downfall of Germany was but the prelude to the collapse of Western civilisation. Spengler was not purely pessimistic. He produced a political philosophy which was itself a precursor of Hitler's creed. He denounced the Weimar Republic because it was subservient to business interests. Socialism and Prussianism, he said, are the same thing. Socialism means *Macht*. The workers and the Prussian intellectuals acting together will revive the sense of duty. Calling the young to their aid they will re-establish Germany. In view of subsequent developments, Spengler's apocalyptic belief in Fate is not without significance. There was a vein of prophecy in his assertion that a Roman hardness is beginning. "Soon there will be room for nothing else. We shall not make another Goethe, but we may yet make a Caesar." Spengler called for "Faustian" men. With this the Nazi teachers agreed. They deplored his failure to see that only race and blood could produce them. Behind all these writings stood a much greater figure, Nietzsche. His disbelief in any ultimate world of truth, beauty and goodness, and his affirmation that the Will to Power was man's greatest inspiration, and that truth was found only in the experience of living made a great impression on all of them, but especially on Spengler. His views also had a direct influence on the leaders of the Nazi movement, though the subtleties of his mind escaped them as com-

pletely as the grace and beauty of his style of writing. Since the war a great change had taken place in the outlook of young Germany. A reaction set in against purely intellectual conceptions of life and against a society founded on class distinction. More stress was laid on feeling, intuition, and action than on abstract thought; at the same time it was urged that feeling and action only come to proper fruition in community. Experience became the watchword; but it must be an experience of the inner soul of a group, a shared experience of actual life. When to this is added the belief that for a German the only group that can fulfil these conditions is the German *Volk*—and nothing narrower—the foundations of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* were already well and truly laid. The philosophy of National Socialism might be described as a reaction against the long attempt to found a new human society on reason, the glorification of the individual, and cosmopolitanism—the movement that was known in the 18th century as the *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), of which the most striking manifestation was the French Revolution. “We are the counter-movement against the French Revolution,” said Gregor Strasser, one of the more intelligible prophets of National Socialism. The Revolution, they said, was the triumph of the bourgeoisie, that liberalism whose brother is Materialism. One logical consequence, Bolshevist Communism. The slogan “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” means the blurring of all distinctions of race, nation, and creed that have made human history rich and noble. Another consequence along a different line is Americanism, whose symbol is Gold, and its typical product the disinterested man, freed from all prejudices—except his own selfishness. Of this disinterested man, unrooted man, the Jew is the most characteristic example. Like many reactions, National Socialism had drunk of the same well from which the movement it opposed had drawn its sustenance. Thus, like Communism, it believes in the dominance of the State, it proclaims a classless society, and despite its denunciation

of materialism, National Socialism believes that there are no absolute values except such as are incorporated in actual human societies on which the life of the individual entirely depends. Thus paradoxically National Socialism can maintain that race and blood and soil are eternal. For these things therefore the individual may rightly sacrifice himself—or others. This is the true faith that transcends reason, and calls for entire devotion.

To the desire to surrender to the inscrutable which lies so deep in the German soul the message of Hitler came as balm. Those who accepted it exulted to find themselves carried along by mighty forces that they believed had always been at work in their race. They were instruments in the hands of a Fate that would justify itself. They were warriors in the great struggle with Satan embodied in concrete forces that had always been trying to delude or trample on the Germanic tribes. These forces were an atomistic liberalism foreign to the German nature, a Bolshevism that denied God and the spiritual world, a materialism that set up the worship of wealth and bodily pleasure in place of the heroic ideals of service and duty, an internationalism that denied the Divine ordering of civilisation through races strong in their own purity and might. National Socialism was thus itself a religion of which the essence is a belief that God had chosen the German people to save the world by loyalty to its own soul, and there were not a few among its followers who found in this belief sufficient to satisfy their religious instincts.

Hitler's Creed

The essence of Hitler's creed is a belief in the supreme value of the German people. Germanism claims an absolute loyalty to which all other loyalties must be subordinated. Only in this way can the mission of the German people to dominate the world be fulfilled. In order to understand why this doctrine took so strong a hold of Hitler, his Austrian origin must be borne in mind. It is probable

that in his own home he had already come under the influence of the Pan-German propaganda of an Upper Austrian neighbour, Georg von Schoenerer. That propaganda was both anti-clerical and anti-Semitic. When he came to Vienna as a young man his convictions were strengthened. In that cosmopolitan city he saw, as he thought, the dominance that rightly belonged to the German threatened by the Slav and the Jew. At the same time he believed that the Pan-German movement had made a mistake in becoming a "Free from Rome" movement, because it antagonized Germans who, though Catholics, were thoroughly German in feeling. Politics, he saw must be separated from religion, even if ecclesiastical dignitaries are provoking. "Political parties," said Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, "have nothing to do with religious problems, so long as these are not of an alien kind and do not undermine the morals and character of the race; just as religion must not be mixed up with political party nuisances. . . . To the political leader the religious doctrines and institutions of his people must always be inviolable; otherwise he should not be a politician but a religious reformer."

It will be seen that Hitler's idea was that religion is all right so long as it is subordinate to loyalty to the race. The politician must not attempt to reform the Churches. But he must be able to present to the members of the Churches as well as to other people a conception of race and people of overmastering appeal. Pan-Germanism must not be merely a political party, just as it should not be identified with one or other of the Christian Churches. Hence he comes to his well-known *Weltanschauung* or world-view. Hitler saw that the days of dynasties and aristocracies were over. They could no longer provide the focal point, as the Habsburgs had done at one period, and the Hohenzollerns at another. Some simple broad conception that could get into the head of the masses was needed, and one that affected everybody and ennobled the humblest man with a sense of mission. He found it in the notion of race and blood and soil. This was far more than a political

idea. Political ideas can be compromised. That which was to establish the German people in its position of supremacy must be uncompromising. "The *Weltanschauung* is intolerant and cannot content itself with the role of a 'party beside others'. It imperiously demands its own, exclusive, and unrelenting, acknowledgement as well as the complete transformation of the whole of public life according to its own ideas."

The passage in which Hitler develops the meaning of a *Weltanschauung* is remarkable as an illustration of the strange way his mind works, as well as of cardinal importance for the light it throws on his attitude to religion. He was impressed by the success of Christianity. Like Gibbon he ascribed that success to its intolerance of any rival (p. 506) "Christianity could not be content merely to build its own altars; it must insist upon the destruction of the heathen altars. Only out of this intolerance could the clearly-expressed faith form itself. Someone may raise the objection that phenomena of this kind of world history are mostly based on specifically Jewish forms of thought; yes, that this kind of intolerance and fanaticism embodies an absolutely Jewish character. This may be a thousand times true, and we may deeply deplore the fact, and with only too much justification regret the appearance in the history of mankind of something that was foreign to it before. That does not alter the fact that this state of things is here to-day. The men who wish to rescue our German people from this condition must not rack their brains about how nice it would be if things were different from what they are, but must try to establish how facts can be altered. A world view inspired by an infernal intolerance will only be broken by a progressive idea possessed by the same spirit, driven forward by an equally strong will, an idea in itself pure and thoroughly reliable. An individual to-day may point out sadly that the first spiritual terror came into the free ancient world through the appearance of Christianity. He cannot deny that the world ever since has been oppressed and dominated by its compulsion, and

that compulsion will only be broken by compulsion and terror by terror. Only then can a new state of things be built up.

Political parties tend towards compromises, World Views never. Political parties have to come to terms with opponents, World Views proclaim their infallibility."

Several points in this revealing utterance are worthy of note. In the first place Hitler has to admit that his outlook on life is ultimately derived from the hated Jew. It is, in fact, shot through with the notions of a Chosen People, a Sacred Race and a Divinely sent Messiah. It is an awkward fact. But intellectual consistency has never troubled Hitler.

In the second place Hitler recognises that his *Weltanschauung* is as "totalitarian" as a religion. Elsewhere he distinguishes a World View from a religion, because it only has reference to this life. But since it claims the whole of this life, the distinction in practice is not very important. He will allow religion a subjective place. It is all right so long as it is merely concerned with thought of the next world, with man's yearnings for the Eternal. But when it deals with objective things, the affairs of this world, it must be warned off.

Thirdly, the complete opposition to Christianity is plain, though guardedly expressed. The World View will only reach its goal when it has replaced the dominance that Christianity has obtained over the minds of men. When he talks of Christianity being imposed by terror he is thinking of the forced conversion of the Franks and Goths under the orders of their kings. He seems to be unaware of any other appeal in the Christian faith. But he is quite frank in his recognition that it will ultimately be necessary to get rid of Christianity by force and terror. Meanwhile this necessity must not be openly proclaimed. Indeed Hitler had himself said that to do so openly in Germany would lead to catastrophe.

To this must be added Hitler's disbelief in reason and profound belief in emotional experience. The mob does not reason, it only feels. If the World View is to succeed, it

must absorb the whole emotional life of the masses. This may be difficult with the old. But the young, with their generous impulses and abounding vitality, can be won to a world view which calls for heroism and adventure and sacrifice—especially if the cause be the country, the people, the race, which is, after all, but the extension of their own ego. The young are naturally intolerant; they love to take sides; they will follow a leader. A distant Heaven has few attractions for them. But a mighty empire on earth which embodies the nobility of their own race, that will make so great an appeal that Christianity can safely be left to die out. The World View will replace it.

Thus before Hitler came into power it was unnecessary, as well as unwise, to declare open war on Christianity. Union in racial feeling behind a Divinely appointed leader must take priority without raising unnecessary antagonism. Modifications can be made at the right time—when power has been won. Hitler saw quite clearly that power could only be won by an ideal.

In *Mein Kampf* he asserts that the restoration of the German people can only come by winning external power again. But weapons themselves are not the most important thing. They are dead, worthless things, so long as the spirit is lacking. The spirit ready, willing, and determined to lead Germany is helpless, not because it lacks the arms, but because it lacks the will. The question then is not, How shall we manufacture arms, but How shall we call out the spirit, which makes the people fit to bear arms? The masses must be nationalised. This cannot be done by professors or diplomats. Their feelings must be roused, and no half measures will do this. This is the work of the spell-binders, the prophets, the Messiahs. "Faith is harder to shake than reason, Love is less susceptible to change than esteem, Hate is more lasting than antipathy, the impetus to the most powerful revolutions on this earth among the masses at all times resides less in governing intellectual conceptions than in a prevailing fanaticism and sometimes in a raging hysteria."

Hitler's aim was to produce this fanaticism and this hysteria; they must be rooted in the thought of the race, and all international notions must be expelled. Thus the World View must be embodied in a movement by perpetual one-sided propaganda. It can brook no spiritual rival—least of all a rival that uproots a man from the people and proclaims an equal opportunity of salvation to all nations.

National Socialist World View

Hitler is a politician. *Mein Kampf* is his programme—a programme that up to date is working out very well. Hitler is not only a politician, but an exceptionally astute one. But since the essence of his movement is its world view (*Weltanschauung*) and its chief instrument propaganda, he knew that some broader philosophic basis was required. For this he turned to one of his earliest allies, Alfred Rosenberg, and his *Myth of the 20th Century*. It is a striking fact that, while the political programme of the National Socialist Party was provided by an Austrian Hitler, and took its rise in ideas that reflect an Austrian outlook, the philosophy of the movement was provided by a refugee from Russia. Alfred Rosenberg came from a family settled in Reval, which was German in origin, but belonged to a group which exercised a great influence in Russian affairs, and were themselves powerfully influenced by the Slav mentality. They were possessed by a hatred of the Jews, which was Russian in its violence, and which reflected the prejudice of the governing class in Czarist times. When they were driven from Russia by the Revolution, the emigrés brought with them into Western Europe this fierce hatred, with this addition—Jew and Bolshevik were regarded as interchangeable terms. When the emigrés were German in origin they managed to make this hatred still more comprehensive, if more confused, by including the Slav in it. The Jew and the Slav were dark forces that threatened the life of Germany. Rosenberg began to write his book in 1917, under the shattering influence of the

Russian Revolution, but it did not see the light till 1930. From 1918 onwards, when he first came to know Hitler, Rosenberg was concerned with the propaganda of the Party.

There is a superficial difference between Hitler's outlook and that of Rosenberg. Hitler took his stand on the Party Programme drawn up in 1920—which has been declared unchangeable. Point 24.

"We demand liberty for all religious denominations in the State, so far as they are not a danger to it and do not militate against the morality and the moral sense of the German race.

"The Party, as such, stands for Positive Christianity, but does not bind itself in the matter of creed to any Christian confession. It combats the Jewish-materialist spirit within and without us, and is convinced that our nation can achieve permanent health from within only on the principle: 'The common interest before self-interest,' (*Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz*)."

This, as we have already seen, represented Hitler's official policy. But it should not be forgotten that already in 1923 Hitler had said in public, "We will have no other God than Germany only." (*Bayrischer Kurier*, May 25th, 1923.)

Rosenberg is quite open in his rejection of Christianity, though at various times he has tried to maintain that his doctrine comes under the head of Positive Christianity. The centre of his thinking is race, which he regards as the key to history. "The blood that perished is coming to life again. In its mystical sign, the soul of the German people is renewing its life-cells. . . . The meaning of history and the tasks of the future no longer lie in the fight of one class with another, or of one Church dogma with another, but in the argument of blood with blood, of race with race, of people with people. . . . Soul means race seen from within, and vice versa; race is the outer form of the soul." Holding this view, Rosenberg is bound to reject both liberal philosophy and Christianity. "Humanity, the

universal Church, and the sovereign individual released from the ties of blood, are no longer absolute values for us any more, but doubtful dogmas and indeed perishing, which lack popularity and are a violation of nature for the sake of abstraction." P. 40. "All the Western States and their creative values have been produced by the Germans." But the German race has always been surrounded by enemies. One of these was Christianity. P. 130. "When Germanic man first entered World History, he kept away altogether from philosophy. What is specially significant for his nature is the dynamic character of his inner and outer life, coupled of necessity with an antipathy against any kind of rigid monotheism or ecclesiastical stiffness, such as was forced upon him by Rome. The German has a passion for freedom but not an individual subjective freedom. The freedom that he longs for is the freedom of the type; type is the temporary form of an eternal racial soul substance. Acknowledging this eternal in the type, the soul achieves the personality for which it longs." In plain English, to surrender yourself body and soul to Germanism (or the Party which claims to represent it) is the perfect freedom.

According to Rosenberg the highest virtue is honour, which means pride of race. Love and pity are signs of weakness. He accepts Christ in a sense. He distinguishes between a "positive" and a "negative" Christianity, thus throwing some light on the famous 24th point of the Party programme. It is the life of Jesus that has meaning for German men, not his agonised death, for which He has to thank the consequences among the Alpine and Mediterranean peoples. The powerful preacher and the angry one in the Temple, the man who tore them away and they all followed, not the Crucified One, is to-day the formative Ideal which shines to us from the Gospels. This is Positive Christianity which awakens anew the power of the Nordic blood, and is opposed to the negative Etruscan-Asiatic ideas, going back to priestly domination and the illusions of witchcraft. The Pharisee Paul had falsified true

Christianity. It follows that some new symbol must be found to replace the Crucifix.

Rosenberg encounters a difficulty when he sets the Gospels against the Epistles as representing the true Christianity. They contain the Sermon on the Mount, with its feminine teaching about turning the other cheek, and not resisting evil. But the difficulty is easily got over. It is not in S. Mark's Gospel, which is the oldest, and therefore it is an interpolation. Only bastardised men like Tolstoi would build on such a basis. It is true, of course, that Jesus did preach love. But a German religious movement which desires to form a German National Church will easily recognise that this love of neighbour is designed to uphold national honour. In a twinkling, then, the notion that the bond that holds members of the Church together is higher than that which holds the nation together is disposed of. Rosenberg is fascinated by the idea of a German Church. It will include communities that practise beautiful old Catholic usages (many are after all Nordic), and those that hold the Lutheran form of worship, and perhaps other forms of Christian worship as well. But there will be no dogmas. All such questions as the relation of God to man in Jesus, the conflicts about love, grace, and immortality are out of date for German people. Instead, community of feeling will be secured by the preservation of German values.

It is not surprising that Rosenberg's book was put on the Index of prohibited books by the Vatican long ago.

Where the Churches Stood

The Protestant Church was not ready for this emotional hurricane. Since the Revolution of 1918 its leaders were fully occupied in building their structure on new foundations, now that the State basis, that had been its chief support since the 16th century, was suddenly withdrawn. The Roman Catholic Church had been able to adapt itself more easily to the liberal State. It had an international

background, and in the episcopate a Divinely appointed leadership. Moreover for the first time since the formation of the Reich it found complete freedom to live its own life. Small wonder that many were drawn to an institution that stood like a rock in a sea of change. Catholics filled many of the important political posts. In alliance with the Socialists they became the chief upholders of the Republic and the agents of a policy of fulfilling the Versailles treaty.

But though the Protestant Church was unready for the emergency that peace brought with it, very quickly new forces of different kinds, under the fostering influence of freedom, began to germinate and grow within it. There was a revival of faith. The Bible was treated once more as a vehicle of revelation, and not merely as the subject of historical criticism. As Dr. Otto Piper puts it, "During and immediately after the War people suddenly discovered that the Bible is more than a document of religious history, like many others, containing as well as strange and humorous stories some good and deep ideas; it is the book which reveals the true meaning of our life and situation in God's world". The New Testament especially was recognised not merely as teaching or information, but a challenge to a life of faith. And faith was just what Germans were looking for. As the Bible was seen to be a treasury of spiritual experience, so also the Confessions, that were the credal statements of the Reformation, came to be regarded in a new light. They too preserved permanent spiritual values. They were seen to have a special importance because they enshrined a corporate affirmation; and as the general movement was away from individualism and towards group beliefs, this gave them a new appeal. Quite in line with this, but most surprising, was a revival of belief in the Church as a corporate entity, not a merely invisible notion. Already in 1923 one of the most respected of the older theologians, Reinhold Seeberg, was saying,¹ "Without a community of believers in Christ

¹ *Zum Verständnis der gegenwertigen Krisis in der Europäischen Geistes-kultur*, p. 92.

or a Church Christianity is unthinkable as a world principle". He claimed that the Church must have a strong organisation which can keep in view the purposes for which it exists, and follow them up with sufficient energy. Moreover those who occupy leading positions in the Church must possess sufficient authority to put through a united work in the Church. Meanwhile a younger group connected with Dr. Heiler formed themselves into a High Church movement to promote Catholic worship and piety without losing hold of Luther's teaching about Justification and Grace. One of the main planks in this platform was a demand for the restoration of the episcopate on the basis of the apostolic succession. Others less interested in the Catholic view of things began to plead for episcopal government on the grounds of efficiency. The search for *Führer* had begun. Still another group, called from its place of meeting the *Berneuchener Kreis*, aimed at enlarging the Lutheran view in two directions—by claiming that nature has a place in the religious outlook because God is Creator as well as Redeemer, and also by reviving the liturgical sense and by deepening sacramental life. But the most powerful influence of all—and one that has acted on the *Berneuchener Kreis* itself—has been that of Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian. With the voice of a prophet he challenged the subjectivism into which Protestantism had fallen. God is supreme and all the world must submit to His Judgment. It is not what we think about God that matters, but what He thinks about us. Man is made to serve God and not God to serve man. This, he said, was what Luther and Calvin had taught; and, because he spoke truly, he found a hearing in German Protestantism that the others did not. He recalled the German people—so far as they were Protestant—to the hole from which they were digged. The message went home for this reason and also because it faced frankly the helplessness of man to save himself. To people in despair Barth proclaimed the necessity of despair as a prelude to faith. Christianity means always and wholly the Cross. He

gave men a standing-ground that nothing could shake. The important point to observe is that all these various movements contributed to a new-found belief in the supremacy of revealed religion and in the necessity for the independence of the Church.

From the moment that Hitler came into power in January 1933 it was obvious that the Churches would be confronted with a grave problem. Thousands both of Catholics and of Protestants welcomed the movement that proclaimed war on Godlessness and materialism and loose morals. Hitler declared himself to be the upholder of positive Christianity and the protector of the Churches. At the same time his ideal was the totalitarian state, in which there must be complete uniformity in politics, in social life, and in religion. The *Volk* must now move forward as one man to its predestined goal. The support of the Churches was sought. What was to be the price that they would be required to pay? In his speech to the *Reichstag* on March 23rd, 1933, Hitler said "The National Government sees in the two Christian confessions most vital factors in the survival of our nationality. Their rights will not be touched. The National Government will accord and secure to the Christian confessions the influence that is due to them in schools and education." At first the Catholic Church said little. There was good reason for this. Up till the election of November 12th, 1933, the Centre Party had been one of the stoutest opponents of the Nazis, who had broadly speaking been anti-Catholic because they regarded Catholicism as a dangerous example of the pernicious heresy of internationalism, a foreign intrusion into German life. The Bishops had issued an appeal to vote against the Nazis.

CHAPTER II

PARTIES IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

The Party claims the totality of the soul of the German people.

LEY

New Life

A VARIETY OF tendencies among the rank and file of Church people led to a demand for radical change in the Evangelical Church.

The first was in the realm of ideas. There were many who felt that the Church had become too remote, fettered by dogmas that were abstract and academic. So much stress was laid upon Sin and the Atonement that the simpler, more human Christianity of the Gospels was obscured; the great truth of the Fatherhood of God to which all His children can respond was regarded as almost heretical. The needs of the ordinary man were forgotten, his joys and sorrows, and his daily struggle to live. What was wanted, it was said, was a Gospel for this life based on the great truth with which the Creed opens, I believe in God the Father, Maker of Heaven and earth; a Gospel moreover that spoke in the language of the man in the street, not in that of the lecture room.

Secondly there was dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic method of Church government. Owing to the indirect method by which they were appointed, the leading men were out of touch with the rank and file. Thus they themselves tended to be officials and administrators rather than leaders or prophets.

Thirdly, the principal functionaries were out of touch with social problems. They tended to be Conservative in politics. They were most closely in touch with the official, aristocratic and industrial classes.

Lastly there was no one Church, but twenty-eight *Landeskirchen*, corresponding to the old princedoms and duchies, each jealous of its independence and therefore constituting an additional obstacle to that one Reich of the German people, which was becoming more and more an ideal passionately sought by the younger generation.

Along these lines there arose an increasing movement for the radical renewing of the Church. When a great wave of emotion swept Hitler into power it was natural that it should be accompanied by new hopes for the Church even among circles who did not subscribe to the characteristic dogmas of National Socialism. The stirring of the waters, the revival of a sense that there were things for which men would live and die, should be a challenge and an opportunity for the Church. It was a day of decision, a day when the dry bones might stir into new life, and stand up once more upon their feet.

The German Christians

It was to these vague inchoate aspirations that the group who came to be known as German Christians made their appeal. Their history is as follows. Even before Hitler came into power there had been discussions within the Nazi party about the relations between the party and the Church. In 1930 a Christian German Movement (*Christlich-deutsche Bewegung*) had come into existence under the guidance of a school teacher, Herr Wilm. Its connections were chiefly with the Stahlhelm and the Nationalist section of the community. Among its leaders was a landed proprietor, Herr von Kleist, a Court preacher, Herr Doehring, two professors, Dr. Althaus and Dr. Hirsch. At a later stage the movement was led by Dr. Rendtorff, the Bishop of Mecklenburg. The Nazi element in the Church looked on this movement as too conservative, too staid. They lacked the clear recognition of race that was needed as the Divine method of action. Above all, they were not definitely party men. In that same year, 1930,

a small group of men met together to provide what was wanted. They were two of the Kaiser's sons, Prince Eitel Friedrich and Prince August Wilhelm, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, the editor of the National Socialist party *Der Angriff*, and Herr Wilhelm Kube, the leader of the National Socialist faction in the Prussian *Landtag*, and the editor of the weekly paper called *Der Märkischer Adler*. A couple of divorced Prussian princes and the editors of two Nazi papers were not perhaps a promising seed plot for a revival in the Christian Church. But they had with them a Pastor, Dr. Wieneke, of the Cathedral at Soldin, and he shewed in the most convincing way how the Cross and the Swastika could be combined. He claimed indeed that he was the inventor of this—as he admitted—unexpected idea, which he had already put forward in *Der Märkischer Adler*. He claimed that National Socialism meant a call of God for the renewing of the Church as a true fellowship of faith of the German people. The point was that the Church must be used to underpin the Nazi movement. Herr Hitler was kept informed and was told that it was proposed to promote a movement of "Evangelical Nationalists". The Führer, with his shrewd instinct for names and slogans, saw that something wider and at the same time more exorbitant was demanded. "Let them be called 'German Christians', because it is the soul of the people must be born again." Thus at a stroke Christianity and National Socialism were identified in the *Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen*. The movement grew, and in 1932 came under the control of a Pastor, who was to become the stormy petrel of the first stage of the Church struggle.

Joachim Hossenfelder was born at Kottbus on April 29th, 1899. His father belonged to a Silesian peasant family and was head of a commercial school at Kiel. In 1917, at the age of eighteen, Hossenfelder joined up as a volunteer, and fought on the Western front. After the war he began to study theology at Kiel and at Breslau. But he found work more to his liking in the border defence corps, and took part in fighting along the Polish border and in

Upper Silesia. He was present at the storming of Annaberg. He was eventually ordained at Breslau in 1929. But in 1931 he took up work at Christ Church, Berlin. Hossenfelder had the gift of vigorous direct speech. On the one side was Marxism and Godlessness; on the other National Socialism and the German Christians. "Christian faith," he said, "is an heroic, manly thing. God speaks in blood and *Volk* a more powerful language than he does in the idea of humanity."

Among those whom he called to serve on his staff was an Army Chaplain, Ludwig Müller, of whom more will be heard later.

When Herr Hitler became Chancellor on January 30th, 1933, the German Christians were ready for action. Bernhard Rust became Prussian Minister of Education, and immediately appointed Hossenfelder an expert adviser in his ministry. Four days later Hossenfelder preached to a gathering of German Christians, in which he reviewed what Christ had done for Germany. Bismarck had forged the Empire on the anvil of war. For four years Hindenburg had defended it with his sword. Now after fourteen years, during which death had taken the place of life, because international forces had decreed that they could only live if Germany was sick, God had again chosen his man,—one of the millions of the World War,—and had given him the greatest mission in German history, a man compact of purity, piety, energy and strength of character, our Adolf Hitler. A good seed had been sown in German soil, the heroes of the World War, the heroes of the S.A. and S.S. "Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ."

The Attack Begins

On April 3rd to 5th a congress of German Christians was held in Berlin, at which the attack on the Church was opened with a resounding salvo. Attack is the right word. The German Christians were convinced that the

Church could never reform itself in the right way in time. Reform must come from outside. The Führer must appoint commissions who would have the power and the will to finish the job. It laid down its programme thus.

"God has created me a German; Germanism (*Deutschtum*) is a gift of God. God wills that I fight for Germany. War service in no way injures the Christian conscience, but is obedience to God. Faced with a State, which supports the powers of darkness, the believer has the right to revolt. He has the same right when confronted with a Church government which does not accept the national resurgence without reservation. For a German the Church is a community of believers, which is under the obligation to fight for a Christian Germany. The object of the Faith Movement of German Christians is one Evangelical German Church for the whole Reich. Adolf Hitler's State calls to the Church. The Church has heard the call."

This object was further expounded in the following way. The German Christian Church would be no ecclesiastical political Church, the days of Parliamentarism in the Church are over, because they have failed to fashion one popular Church. Now there will be a Peoples' Church. We stand, they said, on the basis of a Positive Christianity, and affirm a racial faith in Christ, which springs from the German spirit of Luther and heroic piety. The Church has compromised itself by alliance with Godless Marxism and the unspiritual Centre (Catholic) party. This alliance will be broken. We do not wish for a State Church, nor for a Church which is a State within the State, but a *Reichskirche*, bound up with the People (*Volk*).

We see, they said, in Race, Folk and Nation orders of life, given and entrusted to us by God. Therefore there must be no mixing of races. "Keep your race pure!" is the meaning of the Inner Mission. The Mission to the Jews is a great danger, because it opens the door to the admission of foreign blood into the body of the people. Mixed marriages between Germans and Jews must be

forbidden (Herr Wieneke explained that non-Aryans would be admitted as guests to the Sacraments:) We wish, they said, a Church rooted in the people, and rejecting the idea of a Christian world citizenship, and all such things as Pacifism, Internationalism, and Freemasonry.

Thus armed the German Christians let loose their Storm troops, and began a raging, tearing agitation for a racially pure *Reichskirche* which recognised the National Socialist State as God's ordering, and was therefore enabled to preach the Gospel in the Third Reich. They demanded one *Reichskirche*, the introduction of the *Führerprinzip*, the rejection of Parliamentarism, acceptance of the Aryan paragraph which excluded non-Aryans from office.

The distinguishing mark of the first year of Hitler's regime in the ecclesiastical sphere was the attempt to harness the Evangelical Church to the Nazi regime through the instrumentality of the German Christians. At first many were swept into the movement because they genuinely desired the spiritual renewal of the German people. But from the beginning many, equally convinced of the necessity for that renewal, were quite certain that it would not come this way. While the German Christians thought in terms of a *Volkskirche*, there were others who proclaimed the necessity of a *Bekenntniskirche*, a Church founded primarily on Christian dogma, not on blood and race and soil.

As soon as the "German Christians" had published their Call to Action, a reply came immediately from Dr. Otto Dibelius, the General Superintendent of the Mark of Brandenburg, and the most representative figure among the existing Church leaders, a man of vision, courage and statesmanship, as subsequent events were to shew. In a letter to his pastors he declared, "We are united in affirming that the Gospel stands in opposition to all human ideology, whether nationalist or socialist, liberal or conservative. The Gospel must not be subservient to the selfish wishes of men, but must be their judge." From that moment Dibelius was a marked man. The "German Christians" were determined to get him out of the way.

The "Confessionals"

The kind of ideas that were moving this other group at the outbreak of the Church struggle are well-expressed in a declaration made by a group of pastors at Altona in January 1933, the leading figure among whom was Pastor Asmussen. He was afterwards to exercise a wide influence in what became known as "The Confessional Church". They were so called because they took their stand on the Church's Confession of Faith. The declaration started from the fact that grave public disturbances were taking place. It looked back to "Bloody Sunday", July 17th, 1932, when seventeen people were killed and many wounded during the time of Divine Service.

Men are asking what the Church is for. Some look to it for material help. Others seek its support for a political struggle. The Church cannot satisfy these demands, because its business is to quicken conscience and to proclaim the Gospel.

The Church is a company called into existence by God's creative word, in which Christ is truly present. It is concerned, not with a world of its own, but with the actual world, in which are all the things that make up human life, birth and death, marriage and family, calling and profession, technical activities, states and parties. It proclaims that, in this world, we cannot live as we should, and yet God's supreme power will ennoble our weakness. Church people are not better than other people; their difference is that God by His forgiveness can work mightily in them.

Because Christ is the living power in the Church, its nature cannot be determined by anything else, neither State nor Party nor *Weltanschauung*. The Church must be free to proclaim its message. Fundamentally the Church is not an organisation. Yet the organisation is vital to it, if it is to fulfil God's Will, and if God's voice is to be heard. This organisation may alter to suit the times. But it must be for all, and not limited to any one section. When the Church is invited to take part in military, state or party

celebrations, if it merely makes a contribution to the festivity and fails to uphold the Divine Judgment and Promise as supreme over those who are present, it is misused. Whoever expects the pastor to assert that any particular economic system or political party, military service or pacifism, are specifically Christian, or requires him to say that a hero's death for his country is most blessed, is requiring the Pastor to deny Christ and His Redemption.

God has given different men different functions (*Ordnungen*). To some He has given the duty of bettering humanity by technical and economic skill. But those who place their faith in an earthly kingdom of justice, peace and universal well-being are following an idle dream. Equally misled are those who dream of a national State perfectly founded on justice and a pure race. These things God has reserved to Himself. They belong to the New World, which God will give through Jesus Christ. Meanwhile man stands under the Cross.

The State is an ordinance of God the Creator to restrain man's sinful passions, if necessary to use force for that end. There is no specifically Christian form of the State. Men must always seek earnestly that form which at the time most adequately fulfils God's commands; and they must obey its authority, unless it sets itself against God's commands; when Christians must obey God rather than men. The deification of the State must be rejected. When it claims to dominate conscience it becomes anti-Christian. When political parties assume the airs of religious confessions, they do not only dishonour God, they injure the State itself. When a party claims a control over the individual greater than the State does itself, it errs. There is no hope of better things, unless it is founded on love of neighbour. This is the righteousness that exalteth the Nation.

Every nation must have a religion. Actually it does so, even if it be the religion of Godlessness and the cult of Lenin. By God's guidance we Germans have been made Christian. Whoso fails to recognise this will never get

Germany right. We believe that our people need to honour God. They must not be deprived of the opportunity of doing so. We believe that a Government which is part of the Divine ordering will behave in a considerate and fatherly manner to those whom it rules; it will never treat any section as subhuman. It is part of God's ordering that classes should co-operate. Work is an ordinance of God, not a thing to be bought and sold. Anyone who rests content with the prevailing unemployment is sinning against God. Out of this faith there will come a new justice, which, while it condemns the crime, does not forget to respect the criminal.

It has been thought worth while to state this position at some length, because the statement was made before the struggle for the soul of the Church began. When compared with the "German Christian" statements, it shews clearly the contrast between the two bodies of ideas that were to be locked in deadly combat for five years. It also disposes of the charges frequently made that the opposition was merely a parson's quarrel on the one hand, and a purely political reaction on the other. The two sides were separated by radically opposed philosophies. Of course, when the conflict began, there were many who were merely confused and failed to see the issues at stake. The statement is also important historically because it was the first of the Confessions of Faith (*Bekenntnisse*) which were to be a characteristic feature of the conflict. Moreover, the Altona Pastors' Confession exercised a profound influence, and determined the line of argument to be followed.

The "Confessionals" agreed with the "German Christians" in their ardent patriotism and in their desire for new life in the Church. Where they disagreed was in their evaluation of the National Socialist Movement. With its political aims—with the desire for an awakened Germany taking its proper place in the world—they were in entire agreement. What they could not say was that the Movement was one of the greatest acts of God, or that its leader was His Messenger.

Karl Barth

Karl Barth exercised a decisive influence on those who were opposing the German Christian ideas. He is a Swiss theologian who was born at Basle in 1886, the son of a Professor of the University of Berne. As a young man he studied theology in Germany, at Berlin, Tübingen, and Marburg. At these universities he came under the influence of the critical and liberal theology of men like Harnack, who reduced the meaning of Christianity to a belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. From Wilhelm Herrmann, at Marburg, he learnt to reject intellectualism, to distinguish revelation from doctrine, and to believe that Christianity was primarily a matter of personal experience, which is the one and only authority in religion. The idea of these great teachers was to make religion easy for the modern man by throwing away unnecessary lumber. The genuine piety of Herrmann made a profound impression on Barth. But, none the less, when he came to work as a pastor at Safenwil this "liberalism" left him with nothing to teach. Barth has himself described in moving words the minister's dilemma. "On Sunday morning when the bells ring to call the congregation and minister to the church, there is a note of expectancy as though something crucial and momentous was going to happen, there is a building, the architecture and symbols of which shew it to be a place of extraordinary doings, there are the people, be they many or few, impelled by some strange instinct. In the building there is a man who has chosen of his own free will to devote his life to answering this expectancy. What will he do? He will pray to God. He will lead the people in singing ancient songs full of weighty and weird memories, strange ghostly witnesses of the sufferings, struggles and triumphs of the long-departed fathers. He will read words of infinite import from the Bible all referring to God. But for himself, what has he to say—to say, that is, about God. Everything speaks of the presence of God. Can he, too, speak in His Name." In

his study in the quiet valley of the Aar, Barth agonised over this problem. At last he came to see that the answer was to be found, not in learned commentaries, or in historical enquiries, but in the Bible itself. He saw the Bible as a contemporary writing in which God spoke to the men of to-day. When the veils of foreign philosophies and cultures were torn away, the voice of judgment and of summons sounded forth in clarion tones to the man who was reduced to despair. That sense of helplessness was the pre-condition of succour. When such a man heard that sound with bowed head and readiness to obey he was lifted up and his feet were placed on a rock. The preacher who proclaimed the supremacy of God began to draw men round him. When he published his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans in 1928 his influence reached a wider circle. He was called to be a professor, first at Göttingen for five years, then at Münster, in Westphalia, and finally the call came to be Professor of Systematic Theology in the great Rhineland university of Bonn in 1930. When he arrived there were 180 students. But in the first term the numbers rose to 350. They streamed to the lovely old town by the Seven Mountains from all over the world, from Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Hungary and Great Britain. The voice of the prophet proclaimed the totalitarian claims of the God revealed in Jesus Christ rejecting all compromise. Barth did not succeed in creating a systematic theology. But he did give to hundreds of younger men an exultant sense of liberation by establishing in their minds a conviction of the supreme majesty of God. Barth was not alone. Others were working along similar lines, men like Tillich, Gogarten, Brunnen and Thurneysen. But when the crisis came it was Barth who more than anyone else clarified the issue by insisting that it was impossible to resist a philosophy which was sectional, racial, materialist, except by the direct negative, which appealed, not to man's judgment, but to God's. Barth's theology was open to criticism from many points of view. It was in particular uncongenial to the Lutheran

because it seemed to leave no room for the law of nature, and this rigidity led to misunderstanding, and divisions in the Church forces themselves. Yet Barth's contribution was vital, because even while he laid stress on the Confessions of Faith, he lifted men up to the supreme Reality which is beyond the Confessions, beyond both Luther and Calvin, the Living God, who is Truth, and to whom it belongs to judge all men and all theologies.

The Demand For A Unified Church

In order to understand what follows it is necessary to remember that at that time there was not one German Protestant Church. From the theological standpoint there were three groups with different traditions, the Lutherans who were the largest body, the Reformed (i.e., Calvinists) who were specially to be found in Westphalia and the Rhineland, and the United (i.e., combinations of Lutherans and Calvinists). Geographically there were twenty-eight separate Churches (*Landeskirchen*) corresponding to the States that made up the Reich. After the War tentative steps had been taken towards a closer unity. In 1922 a German Evangelical Church Federation (*Kirchenbund*) had been formed with limited powers, dealing with such questions as the relations between the German Churches and foreign Churches in such ways as the Stockholm and Lausanne Conferences, and also keeping contact with German Churchmen in foreign countries. In most matters the initiation of action remained with the individual Churches. From the moment when Hitler came into power the German Christians began to agitate for a complete unification of the Churches. After the meeting of "German Christians" on April 3rd, referred to above, the Church authorities took alarm while at the same time protesting with evident sincerity that they would gladly co-operate in the work of unifying the Church. From this point onwards Ludwig Müller, an army chaplain of Königsberg, became an outstanding figure.

The Reichsbishop

Ludwig Müller was born on June 23rd, 1883, at Gütersloh, in Westphalia. He became a pastor in 1909. During the war he was an army chaplain in Flanders, and a naval chaplain with the German fleet in the Dardanelles. After the war he became an army chaplain at Cuxhaven. Thus his chief experience was of a military character, and his outlook was in keeping with his experience. When I met him in Berlin in July 1933 I got the impression of a man who, though undoubtedly sincerely religious, was without any theological acumen. He struck me as belonging to that class of Lutheran pastors whom I had known before the War, whose belief in Christianity was so closely intertwined with a strong nationalism that it was difficult even for themselves to say where the one began and the other ended. The years of battle and of national humiliation served to accentuate patriotic feeling in him. Thus the National Socialist movement won his enthusiastic sympathy. In 1926 he met Hitler at Königsberg. The two men were drawn together by the fighting spirit that they had in common, and by a belief in the value of force. Müller made himself useful to Hitler in various ways, and became very intimate with him.

When at length Hitler came to power after thirteen years of struggle Müller was one of those who regarded it as nothing less than a miracle wrought by God Himself. I remember noting the tone of apocalyptic exaltation with which he spoke of it, when I talked with him in the Marchstrasse. Müller married the daughter of a rich merchant, and was therefore in a more independent position than many German pastors. It is said that he was of service to Hitler in getting von Blomberg into the Cabinet.

Müller was a prominent figure at the German Christian conference in April 1933. At the same time Hitler nominated Müller as his confidential adviser in Church matters. He was accordingly appointed *Schirmherr*, or protector of the German Christian movement. Müller represented an

East Prussian group in the movement (which included Professor Fezer of Tübingen). It contended for leadership with the Thüringen section under Hossenfelder. Hitler's intervention meant the victory of Müller over Hossenfelder, who had to accept his rival's appointment as *Schirmherr*.

Meanwhile the constitutional authorities of the Evangelical Church had not been idle. The Church Federation gave Herr Kapler, its president, authority to carry out the reorganisation of the Church. He summoned to assist him a respected and trusted leader of the old Lutheran tradition, Dr. Marahrens, the Bishop of Hanover (where the title already existed) and Dr. Hesse of Elberfeld, who represented the reformed (or Calvinist) section of the Evangelical Church. Hitler appointed Ludwig Müller, his confidential adviser, to work with them. It was the introduction of a State commissar in a disguised form. They met in May at Loccum and drew up a manifesto. It declared that the great stirring of the German people was the work of God and called for a united German Evangelical Church, of which the various *Landeskirchen* would be the powerful helpers. It must be founded on the unshakable basis of the Confession. At its head should be a Reichsbishop, supported by a Spiritual Ministry, who should share with him the direction of the Church. There should also be a National Synod, which would consist of leading personalities in Church life.

Agreement was obtained thus far. But when the question of who should be Reichsbishop came up, a violent conflict broke out. Müller characteristically demanded that he should be appointed. To him and the German Christians behind him this seemed obvious. The Reichsbishop must belong to the "S.A. of Jesus Christ". In this view the whole object was to introduce the Führer principle into the Evangelical Church; that is, to place all control in the hands of one man; and, of course, that man must be one who had the confidence of the Führer of the Reich. Otherwise the Church could not be *gleichgeschaltet*, or co-ordinated with the new regime in Germany.

But that was not at all to the mind of the Church representatives. The idea of the Führer principle ran counter to the whole tradition of Lutheran Church life, and even more to that of the Reformed. Nor were the commissioners favourably impressed by the personality or capacity of Ludwig Müller. They refused to accept Müller's self nomination. Their choice fell on Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, a man of deep piety, who was the director of a great Church organisation called Bethel, near Bielefeld, which consisted of a theological school, a sanatorium, a home for orphans, and other charitable works. The choice was determined by the fact that von Bodelschwingh stood outside all ecclesiastical and political parties and was universally respected as a man of high Christian character. On May 26th and 27th this choice was confirmed by large majorities of the representatives of the Churches. Dr. von Bodelschwingh declared that he only accepted the office in the spirit of obedience and as an opportunity of service (*Diakonie*). He would rather have been called *Reichsdiakon* than *Reichsbischof*. But the name mattered nothing. He would at any rate try to follow in the path of Him who came to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. Neither the choice nor the spirit was at all to the mind of the German Christians. They were determined that the *Reichsbischof* must come from the inner circle of the Nazi movement, and also that he should be a bishop not a "deacon", a Führer who had been forged in the struggle for a "folkic Christianity". Müller declared that if Bodelschwingh were elected, there would be a bitter fight. "I do not fear this conflict, and I shall know how to fight till victory is won."

Despite this challenge, the Council of the Church Federation on May 27th confirmed the choice of von Bodelschwingh. The same evening Müller made a speech on the radio, in which he declared that the German Christians insisted that the Bishop should be chosen from their ranks, and that the electors had not heard the voice of God. The German Christians started a campaign,

designed to shew that the leaders of the Church were in opposition to the National Socialist Government. This set the keynote for the struggle that had now begun. In a shower of telegrams to Kapler, von Hindenburg and Hitler they demanded the appointment of Müller as *Reichsbischof*. They were strengthened in their agitation by a letter in which Müller said that the Chancellor of the Reich had expressed to him his immense regret that the work for the new structure of the German Evangelical Church had taken on a thoroughly disagreeable turn.

Matters came to a head when the Church Synod at Eisenach appointed a successor to Kapler, who had resigned his office as president. The Chancellor answered to the appeal for intervention by permitting the forces of the State to invade the province of the Church. The Prussian Minister of Education, Herr Rust, appointed a State commissar, Dr. Jäger, for the Evangelical Church of Prussia. His task was declared to be "to bring order" into the Church. The action was itself most "disorderly", and in fact illegal. It introduced a confusion into the life of the Church which has persisted ever since. It was not the first case of the kind—already in April a commissar had been imposed on the Church of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, despite the protests of Bishop Rendtorff—but it was the most significant, because the whole of the largest of the Evangelical Churches, that of Prussia, was involved.

The first consequence of the appointment of Dr. Jäger was an announcement by von Bodelschwingh that he could no longer exercise his office. "Through the appointment", he said at Eisenach to the committee who had chosen him, "to-day of a State commissary for the whole of the Evangelical Churches of Prussia, I have been deprived of the possibility of executing the task entrusted to me. I was then compelled to return to the Church committee here assembled the commission given me by its representative." All the General Superintendents of the Prussian Church (officers who are in some ways

parallel to bishops in England) refused to recognise Jäger as a legally appointed official.

Jäger quickly shewed what was meant by introducing order into the Church. He put the Prussian Church under Police supervision, and dismissed pastors right and left as hostile to the Government. One of the first pastors to be dismissed was Dr. Otto Dibelius, the General Superintendent of Kurmark, a part of Brandenburg. The hollowness of the charge of hostility to the Government is shewn by the fact that it was Dr. Dibelius who was selected to preach in the Church at Potsdam when Hitler's regime was solemnly inaugurated in the presence of President von Hindenburg. Dr. Dibelius first learnt of his dismissal through reading of it in the newspapers—a typical example of Nazi bad manners.

Dr. Dibelius replied with courage and decision that he would cease from all administrative business until the legality of Dr. Jäger's action was determined. But he could not allow his functions of bishop and priest to be taken from him by any State commissar. They were conferred by the Church and could only be withdrawn by the Church. "They remain my duties in the sight of God. I must and shall fulfil them—certainly at this time at which true spiritual guidance is needed more than ever by the Church." This was the spirit that gave the opposition its strength, and it was a spirit that quickly spread.

The General Superintendents issued an appeal for a Day of Penitence and Prayer on July 2nd. Hossenfelder, whom Jäger had made Vice-President of the Evangelical Church Council, countered with a manifesto announcing that July 2nd would be observed as a Day of Praise and Thanksgiving "because God had through the intervention of the State led the Church into right paths." It happened that I was in Berlin that day, and I had an opportunity of observing the consequences of this contradictory procedure. In the morning I went to the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniss Kirche where Pastor Hossenfelder was to preach. The great church was full. Nazi flags draped the

altar. Accompanied by a bodyguard of Brown Shirts the pastor moved up the centre to the pulpit, and in that harsh voice which is characteristic of Nazi orators he rapped out a fighting sermon which was a pæan of praise for the God-given victory of the Führer, and an appeal to the Church to rally behind him. The great congregation sang chorales with fervour. At least most of those in the body of the Church did. But in the gallery, where I was, many were silent, and there was an unmistakable feeling of tension, of perturbation, of wonder what it all really meant.

In the evening I returned to the same Church. This time the body of the church was full, but not the galleries. By far the largest part of the congregation consisted of men. The atmosphere was quite different. Gone was the note of stridency, and its place was taken by a grave sense of foreboding and quiet determination to meet whatever must come. Pastor Jakobi occupied the pulpit. In quiet, penetrating tones he spoke of the virtue of patience, of the power of prayer, of the need for sacrifice, of the supremacy of God. That was all. No politics, no word of direct reference to the controversies of the hour. Yet it was plain that a deep impression was made. There was a spirit in that assembly that no earthly power could quell.

It is important to grasp the underlying principles embodied in the Müller regime. The Church—so it was asserted—was not a State Church, because that would have involved the existence of a corporation over against the State itself, and such things could not be in the Third Reich. The Church was incorporated into the State. At its head was the Reichsbishop, who had the complete control of the Church in his hands. He worked through a spiritual ministry. But they carried out his orders. He was advised by a National Synod of sixty members. But they had no power of initiative. They were an ecclesiastical Privy Council, so to speak, an *Oberkirchenrat*, in the strict sense of the word. They did not represent parties, but were outstanding men, who could give counsel when and only when the Reichsbishop wanted it. Thus was the

monarchical principle established in the Church, as it had never been in Germany before, or indeed in any part of the Christian Church, except in the Papacy of later days. It was, in fact, in the Church the counterpart of what existed in the State, when in fact the Divine Right of Kings had been revived in a new form in the person of Herr Hitler.

And this regime was, in fact, imposed by the Monarch. It was Hitler who—through Herr Rust, the Minister for Religion—appointed Dr. Jäger as State Commissar for Prussia. On June 28th Ludwig Müller announced that, after consultation with Jäger, he had assumed the chairmanship of the *Kirchenbund*. On the 7th of July the State Commission announced that Müller had become head of the Church of the Old Prussian Union. All, therefore, had been done in an arbitrary manner. But that was essential, if "Parliamentarism" was to be excluded.

One thing remained to be done. The Reichsbishop must be acclaimed—not elected—by the People. For this it was necessary to elect a synod. It is amusing to notice that, avoid the idea of election as they might, it was bound to come in at some point. However, no pains were spared to restrict any real element of freedom. The only function the synod could have would be to say "Yes" to what had already been done by State action. A big German Christian majority was essential; and it was achieved. Herr Hess, Hitler's representative, laid it upon every National Socialist that it was his duty to vote. He made abundantly clear what voting meant. "When the Führer summons you to vote, he expects an inner decision. There are two ways open. You can allow Church and People to go on side by side without vital connection. You will not follow that suicidal path. You will give the answer to God's question that will set a seal for ever on the union of Church and People." On the night before the election Herr Hitler himself took a hand. The Church could not, he said, be indifferent to the great change that had taken place in the political life of the People. "While the State

is ready to guarantee the inner freedom of the religious life, it has the right to hope that those forces will be heeded by the Confessions that have set themselves on the side of the freedom of the nation." It was a clear invitation to vote "German Christian". And it succeeded. A party had been formed to uphold the rights of the Church. It wished to call itself "the Evangelical Church". But that was forbidden. So the title "Gospel and Church" was adopted. They were fighting with the scales weighted against them. Thousands of people voted who for years had had nothing to do with the Church, and they obeyed the word of command. The surprising thing is that there were so large a minority who refused to surrender. On September 5th the election to the Prussian Synod took place. One third of those present belonged to the Gospel and Church party. They withdrew because they were not allowed to read a protest against the methods employed. The rest elected Ludwig Müller *Landesbischof* of Prussia.

On September 5th a meeting of the General Synod of the Evangelical Church of Prussia shewed how things were going. The Reichsbishop threatened anybody who "spread false information abroad" with internment in a concentration camp. The Synod voted that all political suspects should be expelled from office and also those who had a Jewish grandparent. There were 229 members present, 75 of whom belonged to the "Gospel and Church" group. The German Christian majority greeted Müller as the first Bishop of Prussia and proceeded to elect three of their number as Vice-Presidents, including the egregious Dr. Hossenfelder. Dr. Werner announced that there would be no more synods. Parliamentarism would be superseded by the Führer principle because it was necessary for the Gospel to be in harmony with the nation's blood and race. When the moderates tried to protest against the creation of bishoprics in Memel—which is in Lithuania—and in Poland as likely to have unfortunate political consequences, they were shouted down as traitors. When a draft law was proposed requiring that pastors—and their

wives—must be free of Jewish blood, the “Gospel and Church” group left the room.

On September 21st the first German National Synod was held at Wittenberg, the cradle of Lutheranism, where Luther affixed his Theses to the door of the Church, surrounded by every outward sign of triumphant Nazism. Again Müller was elected by an immense vote. He immediately appointed his Spiritual Ministry. They certainly satisfied the demand for younger men. Hossenfelder, who represented the United Church, was 34; the Bishop of Hamburg, Schöffel, was 52; the Reformed were represented by a pastor from Elberfeld, Weber, who was 31. The legal member, Werner, the President of the Old Prussian Church Council, was 36.

The inner meaning of what had happened was revealed in an incautious utterance of Ludwig Müller. “There had been no encroachment by the State. It was on the initiative of the Führer himself that the election had taken place. He had no thought of encroaching on the life of the Church. On the contrary, he was so convinced of the Divine Mission of the Church that he wished the freedom of the Church to be placarded before the world.” To many it seemed a distinction without a difference. It was a great victory. But, as time shewed, an empty one. Müller’s final word at the Synod was “The Old has come to an end, the New has begun. The political Church struggle is over, the struggle for the soul of the People now begins.” Here he spoke truer than he knew. The Church was indeed to experience a great renewal, but it was a renewal born of a conflict that had but begun, and a suffering unprecedented in extent.

It was not long before the superficiality of the claim to have united the Church in organisation and in life was exposed. The “Church and Gospel” group attacked the new regime on the ground of legality.

They pointed to the Constitution which the State had itself approved. Article 1 said “The unshakable foundation of the German Evangelical Church is the Gospel of Jesus

Christ, as that is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures and has come newly to light in the Confessions of the Reformation. By this will the plenary power which the Church needs for its mission be defined and limited. . . . The German Church gives itself the following constitution". In other words, it does not receive its authority from the State, and is not subject to the limitations of a single people or a single race.

The Bishop Controversy

In England we are familiar with a controversy about the episcopate. It has been with us since the sixteenth century. And we are therefore apt to look at the strife that broke out over the proposal to create an office of Reichsbishop through glasses distorted by a knowledge of our own history. Some of the same elements were present in Germany in 1933. But there were others, wholly German in character, which profoundly differentiated the question at issue from anything that has taken place in England. With us the controversy has its roots in the Reformation, and arises from differing conceptions of what the Reformation involved, and it is primarily a dispute about the necessity for retaining continuity with the historic Churches of Christendom. In Germany its origin was quite otherwise. It sprang from the demands of the National Socialist uprising and its demand for a complete unification of the German People. It is true that since the war there had arisen in Germany a "High Church" movement, which demanded, among other things, the restoration of the office of bishop, which had been lost at the Reformation. By bishops they meant bishops in the Catholic sense, who had received consecration from men who inherited the succession from the early days of the Church. The demand was purely religious. It stood in close connection with tendencies for a return to fundamental Christian dogma. When young Germany was searching for a religion on which to build the broken life

of their people, they found themselves confronted with two obstacles in the Church, on the one hand a modernist liberalism, which evacuated the idea of Revelation of all meaning; on the other a so-called "positive" theology, which had become somewhat arid and scholastic. The High Church movement was part of an endeavour to rebuild on deeper foundations. Though its influence was not wide, it had contributed somewhat to the re-creation of a Church consciousness, and to creating an atmosphere in the Lutheran Church in which the revival of the episcopal title would not be looked upon with disfavour. The Lutherans had preserved other old titles such as "Pfarrer" (parish priest) and Prelate, and in the Scandinavian Lutheran Church there had always been bishops, though, except in Sweden, they were merely titular.

Another circumstance had led to the introduction of the title "Bishop" in some of the German provincial Churches after the war. Luther had, after all, preserved the theory of episcopal oversight. But he had assigned it to the "Godly Prince", who each became "Summus Episcopus" in his own land. With the arrival of the Weimar Republic this important element in the organisation of the Christian Church disappeared. Under the Prince there had been in most Lutheran lands an ecclesiastical head of the Church called a General Superintendent. As time went on an attempt to fill the gap by the replacement of the title "General Superintendent" by that of "Bishop" was made. Thus there had come to be Bishops in Mecklenburg, Saxony, Brunswick, Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hesse-Nassau. But in Old Prussia, for reasons which will appear presently, the change of name was never made. When the struggle caused by the creation of a Reichsbishop became acute, it was seen that there was a positive gain in the existence of officers who, with the title of bishop, had acquired some of the prestige that attaches to it.

But the motives that led to a demand for a Reichsbishop were not of an ecclesiastical order. It was based on the

idea that it was necessary to introduce into the Evangelical Church the *Führerprinzip* which dominated the State. The idea was to co-ordinate the Church with the Nazi unification of the German people, which has revived the national life. As this unification was regarded as itself a religious thing, it was essential that the religious forces should be incorporated under the new Messiah. It was to be just one aspect of the Movement which was summed up in Hitler. Ludwig Müller was to be his trusted instrument in the Church sphere as Goebbels was in that of culture, and Schirach in relation to youth. They all alike would derive their authority from above, from the Führer himself.

The monarchical character of the proposed office of Reichsbishop is clearly implicit in certain provisions of the Constitution drawn up in July 1933. The Reichsbishop represents the German Evangelical Church. He makes visible the community of the provincial Churches and introduces a uniting leadership into the work of the German Evangelical Church. It was true that the Reichsbishop was to be advised by a "Spiritual Ministry"; but he nominated its members. He also nominated the members of the "Privy Council". The German Evangelical Church was to give direction to the whole body of German Evangelical Christians throughout the world—at the bidding of the Reichsbishop. It can make laws for the different provincial Churches. The appointment of the leaders of these Churches must be made in sympathy with the German Evangelical Church.

In other words the local Churches were incorporated into the *Reichskirche*, and supreme over the *Reichskirche* stood the Reichsbishop. This was indeed to introduce a new principle into German Protestant life, the principle of spiritual monarchy. The proper parallel to the position of the Reichsbishop was not the Archbishop of Canterbury, or even the Oecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. The Pope alone in Christendom had powers comparable to those which the Constitution made possible for the German Reichsbishop, and in some respects his

powers exceeded those of the Pope himself. To many it seemed a betrayal of the whole Reformation.

In order clearly to grasp the revolutionary character of the proposed change it must be remembered that in German Protestantism the Church is not governed by its officers in the last resort, but by the true preaching of the Gospel. The ruling idea is that the Gospel certifies the pastor, not the pastor, or any collection of pastors, the Gospel. Fundamentally the Church of Luther is a Church of laymen. Baptism is the supreme Sacrament; ordination is not a consecration by supernatural power, but an appointment to an office, though, no doubt, a sacred and responsible office. The congregation (*Gemeinde*) is therefore the community of the baptised, the supreme body. The pastor is not its ruler but its minister. Luther's Church is rooted in the priesthood of every believer; and there is no other priesthood. That did not exclude Bishops as such, but it excluded a Bishop appointed for life, as the Reichsbishop was, and a Bishop that was neither appointed by the congregation nor could be recalled by it.

If this was the view of the characteristic Lutheran theologians, the Reformed were even more opposed to a spiritual monarchy. They were the descendants of Calvin, and they wholly rejected Bishops, both name and thing. Even more emphatically than the Lutherans they emphasised the supremacy of the community as the supreme Church authority. In their view the leadership of the Church of New Testament days was not dependent on any office. It was the natural leadership that belongs to men who were filled with the Holy Ghost. They were inclined to look with some suspicion on the Lutherans, because among them they detected tendencies which gave to Bishops a teaching authority and a spiritual leadership that they believed contrary to Reformed principles. Just because they were a minority, they resented, for example, Dr. Zoellner's claim that the *Reichskirche* must be Lutheran, and they strongly protested against the appointment of a Bishop in Baden, who, though elected by the synod,

could not be removed by it. In these things they saw a Romeward tendency, and they insisted that the Reformed must be allowed to preserve within the *Reichskirche* their own confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, side by side with Luther's Catechism. The Church, they maintained, is a lay Church, democratic in its working. Its organs of expression are the presbytery and the synod.

It would be a mistake to assume, as has been done in certain quarters, that the whole controversy in the German Evangelical Church was merely a theological quarrel between the Lutherans and the Reformed. So far as the crucial question of the Reichsbishop was concerned, both Lutheran and Reformed stood on the same ground, but the Reformed were the more emphatic. Both were willing to agree to a functionary who should be a bond of union between the two confessions, who would represent the Evangelical Church in dealings with the State and with foreign Churches. Both alike rejected the notion of a spiritual overlord who embodied the *Führerprinzip* and could act independently of his spiritual ministry. Weber, the Reformed member of the Spiritual Ministry, spoke for a majority in the Lutheran rank when he said that he would only follow the Reichsbishop in so far as the Reichsbishop followed Christ.

The Reformed, who were most numerous in Westphalia, in the Rhineland, and in East Friesland, were the spear head of the opposition to the Nazification of the Church. But from the earliest days they had many Lutherans shoulder to shoulder with them.

The Gaffe in the Sport Palace

The Reichsbishop was finding his task of reducing the Church to submission full of difficulties, when an event occurred which brought his whole regime into discredit. On November 13th the German Christians held another great demonstration in Berlin at the Sportpalast. The Reich leader of the German Christians, Hossenfelder, now

Bishop and Church Minister, presided over the gathering. But the speech of the evening was made by a layman, hitherto unknown to fame, Dr. Krause, who had risen to a prominent position in the German Christian party. The burden of his speech was the necessity for making the National Socialist masses at home in the Church. If this was to be done they must get rid of the Old Testament, with its doctrine of rewards, and its stories of cowdealers and *souteneurs*. The Old Testament had rightly been called the most questionable book in the whole history of the world. No one would be listened to who tried to combine the Old Testament and a racially correct Christianity. This was provocative enough. But Dr. Krause did not stop there. "All superstitious passages must be removed from the New Testament, and in particular a radical revision must be made of the whole theology of the Rabbi Paul. The Church must be built on the pure teaching of Jesus, Love your neighbour as yourself.

"We need no God on a distant throne, but Jesus the fighting Hero. The places in Germany which have been drenched with holy blood mean more to us than distant Palestine, because these places have drunk up the offering of the German struggle for freedom." (The reference was, of course, to Nazi Putsches and street-fights.)

A storm broke that spread all over Germany. Was this the intellectual level of the German Christians? Did Krause not know that the command to love your neighbour as yourself came from the Old Testament? Was this ignorant and superficial liberalism the kind of theology characteristic of the German Christians? Above all, what people wanted to know was, Did Hossenfelder know what Krause was going to say? Or was he merely so stupid that he did not understand the storm that would be raised? Why did he not protest at the time? These were the questions asked.

The agitated Reichsbishop added to the confusion by saying first one thing and then another. He removed Krause from his office in the movement. He rejected the

attack on the Confession of the Church and on the Bible in the strongest terms. At the same time he supported Hossenfelder. The impression grew that Ludwig Müller's word could not be trusted. It was then that he began to receive the nickname "Lügen-Müller" (lying Müller).

The excitement stirred the loyal pastors to fresh activity. They formed themselves into a Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*). It consisted of various elements, among which were various pastors' brotherhoods that had sprung up all over Germany with the idea of deepening Church life, and also the group that had put forward the "Gospel and Church" candidates for the National Synod against the German Christians. The Emergency League was the germ out of which grew later the Confessional Church. The movement, which then came to a head and found organised expression, had already been recognised as dangerous by the Church Government. Even before the meeting in the Sportpalast three of their leaders had been suspended by Hossenfelder, the pastors Niemöller, von Rabenau and Scharf. Quite at the beginning of things, Niemöller had distinguished himself by the vigour of his attacks on the German Christians and especially the attempt to impose the Aryan paragraph on the Church. But the State had extended its protection to the former submarine officer, who had so distinguished a record of patriotic service.

The Emergency League came out into the open on November 19th by reading from their pulpits a denunciation of the Church Government because they had failed in their duty. They had not, they said, defended the Faith against the attacks made on it at the Sportpalast; and yet they retained their offices! Heathenism was invading the Church, and they stood by and did nothing. "We refuse," they said, "to earn the reproach of being dumb dogs. We owe it to our congregations and to the Church to resist the falsification of the Gospel. We emphatically recognise the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as the unique test of our faith and life and the Confessions of our Fathers as the reformed explanation thereof."

The Pastors who gave their adhesion to this action were a formidable body, some 3,000 in fact. On the previous day, November 18th, a meeting of thousands of Church members and pastors had taken place in Westphalia (where the resistance was particularly strong). They did not mince matters. They demanded the removal of the leaders of the Church, who had maintained so ominous a silence, the withdrawal of the Reichsbishop from the "German Christian" movement, who, they said, should abandon his office of "Protector". They also demanded freedom to preach the pure Gospel, as it was contained in the Bible and the writings of the Reformers. An immense controversy broke out in which Catholics and adherents of the German Faith Movement participated. The "German Christians" found themselves attacked both because they were not genuinely Christian, and also because they still attempted to combine Christianity with Germanism. The general public was aroused, and began to take a new interest in theological discussions. The Emergency League—who were the younger pastors—began to win support in more conservative quarters. The older and more cautious Lutheran leaders joined in on their side. The Lutheran representative of the Reichsbishop's "Spiritual Ministry", Dr. Schöffel, the Bishop of Hamburg, resigned his post. The South German Lutheran Bishops came in behind the Emergency League, as well as North German Lutherans and also the Reformed. A special significance attached to a combined declaration made by the Church leaders of Bavaria, Württemberg, Hanover, Thüringen, Oldenburg, Hamburg and Euten, which aimed particularly at Hossensfelder. They demanded a reconstitution of the Spiritual Ministry, which would make it more representative of the Church as a whole than the National Synod, which had been dominated by the German Christians. They declared emphatically their devotion to the Führer of the German people and rejected any imputation of reactionary politics.

Some sections even of German Christian opinion agreed

that Hossenfelder must go. Among those who did so was a group in Thüringen, which was the one part of Germany where the movement had real popular backing of a genuinely religious kind.

The luckless Hossenfelder made himself still more impossible by various contradictory actions. On November 23rd, at a public meeting of German Christians at Weimar, he subscribed to the Thuringian position, and the very next day threw them over. Shortly after he paid a visit to London and denounced the Aryan paragraph¹; when he returned to Berlin he once more acclaimed it enthusiastically. An official statement of the German Christian movement was issued which affirmed the complete unity of the Protector (Müller), the Reichsleader (Hossenfelder), and the district leaders of the German Christian movement. Despite secessions in Bavaria and Württemberg, the Reichsbishop proclaimed "Hossenfelder and I are inseparable". It is impossible, he declared, for a Reichsbishop to listen to the demands of a waning group, as it deprived his office of all meaning. After much shilly-shallying he capitulated all the same. The device adopted was the reconstitution of the whole Spiritual Ministry, with Hossenfelder left out. Shortly before Christmas Hossenfelder resigned all his offices. He ceased to be Vice-President of the Evangelical Supreme Church Council, Bishop of Brandenburg and Reichsleader of the German Christians. It was an undoubted victory for the Emergency League.

The position of the Reichsbishop had been severely shaken. He had lost confidence on every hand. But he was still in the saddle, and he pressed forward with his policy of bringing the Church into line with the Party. His next step was to turn his attention to the Youth question. But as this question has a special importance it will be as well to break off the narrative here to go more fully into the attitude and organisation of youth.

¹ The Theological Faculty of the University of Marburg had in September condemned the Aryan paragraph as "irreconcilable with the character of the Christian Church", and as reducing Non-Aryans to a position of lesser right in the Church.

CHAPTER III

THE YOUTH QUESTION

It is eminently Teutonic to subordinate the relation father-child to the relation Führer-followers. GRUNSKY

EVEN BEFORE THE War the Youth of Germany had acquired a new-self consciousness. They wandered about in gangs, seeking communion with nature and with one another, to the accompaniment of folksongs and the guitar. A new worship of the body, its strength and beauty, sprang up. The dangers of this naturalism, both intellectual and moral, are obvious, especially when practised in community. But, on the whole, the *Pfadfinder* and the *Wandervögel* produced a fine race of young people, free in mind and healthy in body, who had cast off some of the shackles of convention and regimentation that had dominated German life for generations. Nor was the Church slow to play its part. To meet the new aspirations, a fresh emphasis was placed on certain aspects of theology that had long been overlaid. The exclusive interest in sin and redemption was replaced by a re-assertion of the Love of the Father who when He created the physical world pronounced it good. Life was viewed sacramentally. The common things of man's existence were seen to have a mystical quality. The holiness that had long attached to water and bread and wine in the Christian tradition revived, and they in their turn became symbols of the dignity of labour.

On all these strivings the dark curtain of war descended in 1914. When the shadow was lifted and the younger generation found themselves without a guiding star, many turned once more to fellowship in communing with nature, as a way out from the aimlessness and futility that surrounded them. On the mountains, in the forests, they

could at least forget the economic pressure which threatened to grind them to powder.

Side by side with this revival of nature worship there went a re-emergence of national feeling. A harder note entered into the aspirations of youth. They must be strong in body, and united in soul in order to save their country from destruction by a readiness to fight and to sacrifice themselves.

Once more the Churches began to take their share; they endeavoured to guide these confused aspirations into deeper channels. This is a fact that it is important to bear in mind when the reproach of mere conservatism is levelled against the post-war Churches of Germany. Catholic and Protestant alike threw themselves into the Youth Movement, and they met with considerable success. A new kind of pastor and of priest appeared who were as capable in the sphere of sport as in the realm of theology. They emphasised the moral value of physical fitness in opposition to the more sentimental, degenerate and irresponsible tendencies at work in the Youth Movement. A Christian who was manly and hardy was all the better Christian for that. The movement for a community in physical, moral and religious training caught the imagination of the young. It grew to such an extent that the Youth organisation became almost a Church within the Church. In 1933 the Association of young people known as the *Evangelische Jugend Deutschlands* had more than 700,000 members. At its head stood Erich Stange.

The arrival of the Nazis in power constituted a severe challenge to this movement. They believed themselves to be the creators of a new Germany. It was vital that youth should be in their hands. Though they had to proceed with caution at first, it was obvious that the Nazi movement must aim at control, especially now that the State was based on the Party. The Party, as we have seen, was no ordinary political party. It was a movement based on a special "Outlook on Life". Education was thus its particular province. The necessary tactics were outlined

by Hitler himself. "We all know that Revolutions have to demonstrate their success by their results. It is not difficult to achieve power. It is harder to hold power. Hardest of all is it to educate men in a new 'Outlook on Life'." Thus in regard to the Church, it was comparatively easy to get control over it. It was much more difficult—and more necessary—to dominate its mind. And where the young are concerned this is the vital task.

The Nazi leaders were able to point proudly to certain achievements in the moral sphere which would, they maintained, justify their claim to be the sole controllers of youth. They had driven away a corrupting Bolshevism. They restored Luther to his place of honour as the greatest German, they proclaimed the Harvest Festival as a national festival of thanksgiving to God, in which all Confessions could join. They took the side of religion, instead of being neutral, as was the Weimar Republic. Many children were once more sent to Christian schools, whose parents had been shy of sending them before. Most important of all, they initiated a campaign against pornography and immorality. The German cities were cleaned up. The ideals of loyal married life were exalted. There was much to encourage parents and to protect the young.

At the same time a new factor appeared on the horizon. The flames of nationalism took possession of the young. The *Hitler Jugend* was born. What was the attitude of the Churches to be towards an organisation that claimed so much that they themselves had hitherto done? There were some who refused to see any incompatibility between the religion of racialism and the religion of the Church. *Das Evangelische Deutschland*, the official Church newspaper, which had been brought under the control of the Reichsbishop, broke out into lyrical strains. "The God-given foundations of Home, People and State will be recognised anew. The People stands on its feet. A movement goes forward which will bridge the divisions of Classes, Ranks, and Families. In this hour the Evangelical Youth of Germany utters a joyful 'Yes' to the break-through of the

German nation. It recognises that a renewal of the life foundations of the whole people touches the Evangelical Youth work at the heart of its historical mission and calls it to a conjunction of Good and Blood (*Einsatz von Gut und Blut*). Evangelical Youth knows that at this hour the living powers of the Gospel can alone bring salvation and renewal out of destruction and downfall. Therefore we as Evangelical Youth step forth renewed under God's command and promise. The holy God has condemned dissolution and destruction in morals, calling, family, and State. For this reason the standpoint of the young Evangelical Front in these days can be nothing else than a passionate participation in the fate of our people and at the same time a radical decision about the way it can further the Word of God."

The heads of the Evangelical Youth approached Hitler asking that representatives of the different youth movements might form a council round the Reichsleader of Youth whom it was intended to appoint, care having been taken to secure that they worked in the spirit of the National Revolution. As a consequence, Stange was made leader for the Evangelicals in the United Front of German Youth Association.

In June 1933, Baldur von Schirach was nominated Leader of the Youth of the Reich of the National Social Democratic Party. Then the struggle began. He did not shew his hand immediately. He declared that the different organisations would retain their individuality and assured Stange that no "Gleichschaltung" of the Evangelical Youth was intended. When the names of the Youth Council were announced, they included a Catholic representative—and Stange for the Protestants. In July the whole of the Evangelical Youth was placed under the direction of the Reichsbishop, Ludwig Müller, who declared that he would see to it that they were not hindered from confining themselves to their proper work, and therefore there could be no double membership of the *Hitler Jugend* and the Evangelical Youth. At one blow all games, excursions, and so forth, were removed from the control of the Evangelical

Youth leaders, and their work was confined within the limits of religious exercises in the most restricted sense of the word. No more Church uniforms would be worn. By this means the 700,000 Evangelical Youth would be able to participate in what he euphemistically termed "the missionising of the People".

Stange, seeing how things were going, pleaded for the retention by the Evangelical Youth of its own work. He did his best to stand up for keeping the Youth work on a broad basis in the different localities. But von Schirach was extending his activity. He said publicly that the extension of the Confessional Youth Groups would be dangerous for the *Hitler Jugend*, one of the main objects of which was to transcend confessional differences by a common faith which put Germany first. For himself, he was neither Catholic nor Protestant, he believed only in Germany. When, in consequence of this statement, von Schirach was denounced as an enemy of Christianity, he denied it, saying that he stood on the Christian basis. National Socialism had a closer connection with the God in Heaven than with the Christian parties. He would allow none of their poison in the *Hitler Jugend*. Müller, after an interview with von Schirach—and with Stange—declared that the Church work among the youth would not be hindered.

In October the Reichsbishop set up a temporary committee for the settlement of the question. On the 19th of December he issued a final agreement with von Schirach, which brought the committee to an end, and got rid of Stange, who had put up a good fight. It may be added that he still continued to work for the organisation of Evangelical Youth on religious lines, and in fact still does so, though beset with difficulties.

In this statement it was made quite clear that no one could participate in the Evangelical Youth work who was not a member of the *Hitler Jugend*. All sport and all political education up to the age of eighteen would be in the hands of the *Hitler Jugend*. On two afternoons in

the week and on two Sundays in the month young people would be free to take part in purely Church educational activities, and permission for this would be given, *when possible*. In any case, the Youth work with the Hitler Youth would be limited to two week days and two Sundays in the month.

On December 21st the Reichsbishop announced that he had sent Hitler a telegram informing him that he had incorporated the Evangelical Youth in the *Hitler Jugend*. He also said that he had dismissed Stange because he had tried to sabotage the unification desired by Adolf Hitler.

On January 4th, 1934, the Reichsbishop appointed Zahn, a pastor from Aachen, Youth Pastor of the German Evangelical Church. Zahn immediately issued an appeal to all German boys and girls to help him to rebuild the Evangelical youth work in the Church, and to give a German answer to the unrest in the Church, which was the war of Him who said "I am come to light a fire on the earth". "The Church," he said, "knows that the future lies with the German who is a National Socialist."

This strange utterance only accentuated the opposition which was growing among the leaders of youth throughout Germany. They were not slow to ask where the family life came in—which the Nazis professed to uphold—if all the free time of the young people was to be divided between the Party and the Church. The double membership of *Hitler Jugend* and Church youth would, they prophesied, lead to constant conflict and tension. In any case the true religious training of the Youth would become unworkable, if religion was to be separated from all contact with life. It would be preferable if the *Hitler Jugend* would take one whole day in the week, Saturday for example, and leave Sundays for the young people to cultivate their own lives and personalities. But that, of course, is just what the Nazis wanted to prevent. Such ideas savoured of the bourgeois liberalism which was as abhorrent to them as Marxism—in fact, much more! Moreover, what guarantee was there that in the camps

the youth would not come under influences hostile to Christianity, or at any rate to any Christianity worthy of the name? As time went on this became the dominant question. But in view of the patronage shewn to Hauer's Faith Movement the more far-sighted scented the danger from the first. It is summed up in Hauer's own words. "From a broader historical outlook it is evident, now, that the domination of Christendom over Germanic regions was but an episode of a thousand years, a period which now belongs to the past."

December 19th was a milestone in the story of the relations of Church and State in Germany. By a stroke of the pen the Reichsbishop had done his best to hand over the youth of the Church to the control of the Party. Whatever apology might be made by those concerned to minimise the seriousness of the situation, it could not do away with the fact that Müller had consented, and gladly consented, to impose the most serious limitation on the free exercise of religious teaching in Germany, and had made it more difficult than ever to secure in the minds of the young those universal principles which are the surest safeguard against racial heresies and a belief in the supremacy of violence in human affairs. Small wonder that in many circles the Reichsbishop was regarded as a traitor to the Church. The Party had gained a victory of the greatest significance for the future in their campaign to obtain possession of the minds as well as the bodies of the German people. As usual it had been by co-operation with those inside the beleaguered fortress. It had been carried out under the veil of constitutional action.

CHAPTER IV

THE REICHSBISHOP'S DICTATORSHIP

The practice of law is a political activity.

TREITSCHKE

(Quoted by Hess, Hitler's adjutant.)

The Reichsbishop Makes His Own Laws

TOWARDS THE END of 1933 the Reichsbishop was hard beset. On December 19th he had counter-attacked with the dramatic stroke by which he incorporated the whole of the Evangelical Youth in the *Hitler-Jugend*. On the very same day the Lutheran Bishops, headed by Dr. Meiser, Bishop of Bavaria, and Dr. Wurm, Bishop of Württemberg, delivered an ultimatum. They made three points. Their first complaint was that there was at present no theological member of the Spiritual Ministry, as required by Article 7 of the Constitution of the German Evangelical Church. Without such an assistant the Reichsbishop's position was illegal, and the Church was unable to carry out its duty to the State and the People. Secondly the Ministry, despite this fact, had issued far-reaching laws, which refused recognition to the position of the constitutional leaders of the Church. These heads of Churches would, therefore, unless some change was made, feel bound to act on their own authority in their respective districts, in order to bring to an end an intolerable state of things.

Müller, after a conference with the Church leaders, assured them that he would complete his Spiritual Ministry as soon as possible after consultation with them. All the same, in characteristic fashion, he went on merrily with his illegal law-making. But it took an unexpected form.

He annulled a law of November 16th which postponed the application of the Aryan paragraph in the district Churches that had adopted it until such time as the question should be settled for the whole Reich. By doing so he re-imposed the Aryan paragraph in the Churches that had adopted it. One of them was Prussia, of which the Reichsbishop was himself also Bishop. The other law was the "Muzzling Order", as it was called. By this pastors were forbidden to introduce subjects connected with the Church controversy into their sermons, or to publish any books or pamphlets about it. If they did so, they would be suspended from office, and lose one-third of their income.

An explosion immediately followed. The Emergency League, which had now increased in numbers, and was by this time some 4,000 strong, met at Halle and drew up a protest. On Sunday, January 7th, it was read from the pulpit to crowded congregations. The protest deplored the confusion into which the Church was thrown by illegal action ever since "the elections of last year brought a new leader into our Church". A big movement was openly demanding that heathenish beliefs should be made the foundation of Church doctrine. But a large number of pastors, as well as an enormous proportion of believers and true Churchmen, were demanding that the life and the leadership of the Church should be moulded again in conformity with the articles of faith.

The main point was that the Primate had consistently avoided completing his Spiritual Ministry and acting in co-operation with it. On the contrary he had issued a decree forbidding all criticism of his regime and threatened with violence all who did so. He had also revived laws which he had revoked in order to bring peace to the Church. The reference was to the Aryan paragraph. By his arbitrary action he had forfeited the confidence of the Church.

As, at the same time, a large body of pastors who had formerly been German Christians withdrew their support,

the position of the Reichsbishop began to look precarious; particularly as this group included pastors from widely separated districts—Silesia, Danzig, Essen and Berlin.

The Confessionals were right in urging the illegality of the Reichsbishop's action. The legal member of his Spiritual Ministry had been Dr. Werner, who was removed by the Reichsbishop by ordinances he issued on January 26th and February 5th. Without the consent of the jurist member ordinances had no legal force. Dr. Werner proceeded against Müller in the district court for illegal dismissal. He won his case, but was not re-instated.

The Opposition were greatly encouraged, because they understood that the old President von Hindenburg was deeply disturbed and had appealed to Hitler to use his influence to promote peace. When, therefore, their representatives were summoned to meet the Chancellor on January 25th, they went to the meeting with high hopes. They were to receive a shock, as they discovered the forces arrayed against them. The conference was presided over by the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Frick. There were eight representatives of the German Christians, led by Ludwig Müller, and eight representatives of the Opposition, among whom were Bishop Meiser, Bishop Wurm and Bishop Marahrens, representing the older men, and Dr. Niemöller representing the younger. Hitler was himself present. The Reichsbishop was himself the bone of contention. The Opposition proposed a *modus vivendi*. Müller should go on leave, and Dr. Marahrens, Bishop of Hanover, should be appointed temporary administrator. By this means it was hoped that the work that had been begun at Loccum would have been resumed in a way that would rally all the different sections of Church life, —and the Ludwig Müller regime would become merely an unfortunate episode. Then something happened, the exact nature of which has never been revealed. What is fairly certain is that immediately General Goering intervened with evidence supplied by the Secret Police which they had discovered through tapping the telephones of

Opposition pastors. It was asserted that Niemöller had said that Hitler was receiving extreme unction from President Hindenburg. At any rate, what was reported was something that made it look as though the Church Opposition was plotting against the regime and the sacred person of Hitler. This apparently caused consternation among the Lutheran Bishops, who dreaded more than anything else to be thought "reactionary". The accusation came near that of treason (*Landesverrat*). There can be little doubt that all this had been carefully planned, and that the somewhat naïve Bishops had been led into a trap. Hitler and Goering were not going to surrender their tool for co-ordinating the Evangelical Church so easily as that. At the same time it is probable that the Reichsbishop made certain promises, which helped to save the faces of the Lutheran Bishops.

All that the German public knew was contained in an official announcement that the leaders of the German Evangelical Church had had an interview with the Chancellor, at which they had declared their united and unshakable confidence in the Third Reich and its Führer. They condemned the statement in the foreign Press which falsely represented the Church controversy as a struggle against the State. Most important of all, it was stated that the Church leaders ranged themselves solidly behind the Reichsbishop, and pledged themselves to carry out his orders in the way he wished, to obstruct the Church Opposition and to use every constitutional means to strengthen the position of the Reichsbishop.

It was a tremendous victory for Müller over the Opposition—and for Hitler over Hindenburg! The German Christians were jubilant; Opposition circles were dismayed and dejected. Many felt that they had been betrayed. Niemöller wrote a strong letter to the Bishops on behalf of the Emergency League expressing their dismay and their fears for the future of the Church. There would be a profound troubling of conscience. By human means it was impossible to change what had happened. But they

would fight on against the government of the Church by force. They stood alone now. But they were not alone, because they would commit their cause to Him who said, "Lo I am with you to the end of the world". He would lead his Church Himself. On January 31st the leaders of the Emergency League wrote to the Reichsbishop that their consciences forbade them to accept laws contrary to the Gospel. The new government of the Church was for them not a question of power but of evangelical truth. The "German Christian" paper *Evangelium in Dritten Reich* did not make things easier by proclaiming that the surrender of the Bishops shewed that the opposition to the Reichsbishop did not spring from loyalty to the faith and the confessions. At a wink from the State they had retreated because they saw their political aims could not be achieved. Müller's victory was more apparent than real. As a matter of fact Bishop Meiser had within two days—on January 28th—made it clear to the Reichsbishop that he had not made a complete submission. He wrote a letter demanding the withdrawal of the law promulgated by the Reichsbishop on January 4th, and saying that he would only put regulations of the Reichsbishop into force in his own Church so far as they were consistent with the Confession of Faith and the free preaching of Evangelical truth.

Meanwhile two events had occurred which throw a lurid light on the forces at work. Dr. Jakobi was attacked by Nazi rowdies in his study and knocked about, a few days before the new agreement was announced (January 24, 1934). Two days afterwards Dr. Niemöller was arrested, taken to the headquarters of the Secret Police, and subjected to a long examination. He was released; but the documents belonging to the Emergency League were confiscated. These were presages of what Müller's fresh encouragement by the State would mean for those who stood in the way.

One of the immediate consequences of Müller's new-found confidence was, however, of a different character.

The Nazi policy in dealing with their varied groups of enemies had always been to maintain that the main body was sound at heart, and only prevented from being truly Nazi in feeling and action by the cunning and misleading propaganda of their leaders. By striking hard at the leaders they were able to bring large bodies of their followers—ostensibly—under their control. It was thus that many Communists were brought into the ranks of the Brown Shirts. The same policy was now adopted in relation to the Church. A distinction was drawn between the guilty and the guiltless. The "German Christian" publication, *Gospel in the Third Reich*, exhorted its readers only to concern themselves with the great sinners and to leave the little ones alone. The ring-leaders were only a tiny fraction of the pastors, who stirred up trouble. The great mass were really helpers, deceived by false information into co-operating with the Opposition. They must be won over to marching in the right direction. The wind must be taken out of the sails of the leaders by a fresh emphasis on the importance of the Confessions of Faith. Then they could say, What is all this fuss about? The other half of this policy was illustrated by suspensions of pastors, which became more and more numerous in West Germany.

This aspect of the matter was causing profound concern in the Churches outside Germany. Into the details of the Church controversy in Germany it was difficult for foreigners to penetrate. But there was something plainly shocking in the removal of clergymen from their office by arbitrary action in co-operation with the police. In January 1934 the first official protest was made from abroad. The Bishop of Chichester, Dr. George Bell, made public a remonstrance on behalf of the World Council of Life and Work, of which he was chairman. Its main point was the obstacle placed in the way of happy relations between the Reichs Church and other Christian Churches by the use of force and violence against men whose devotion to the faith of the Church was only equalled by their loyalty to their Fatherland.

Attempts were made on behalf of the Church government to rebut such charges by saying that the orders of the Reichsbishop in no way interfered with the freedom of preaching the Gospel, or even of the criticism by individuals of particular circumstances. But attacks on the Church government itself could not be allowed because they injured the good order of the Church and broke its unity. The question was where was the line to be drawn between legitimate criticism and insubordination. In fact it was the ordinances of the Reichsbishop which split the Church in two. The theory that it was just a few tiresome pastors who were causing all the trouble completely broke down in Western Germany, where the congregations stood solidly behind their pastors. The case of Niemöller no less clearly shewed what the cause of division was. When he was removed from his office, he declared in a letter to the Reichsbishop that the action taken against him was absolutely illegal, as had been proved by weighty legal opinion and was no less contrary to the Confession, as equally weighty theological judgments had shewn. He paid no attention to the decree for his removal. From the pulpit he stoutly maintained that in relation to religion the theory of "Blood and Soil" was merely heathen materialism, contradicting the universality of the Christian revelation. No earthly power could shatter divine faith. His church at Dahlem was crowded. Niemöller's congregation stood firmly behind him and passed a resolution declaring that they would protect the foundations of the Confession and the constitutional order of the Church with all their power. For this reason they refused to carry out the order of February 11th, 1934, for his exclusion from the Church.

The Synodical Movement

The victory of Müller and of Hitler was seen to be a Pyrrhic victory. Niemöller's case, though the most striking because of his outspoken utterances and the number of important people that his congregation contained, was by

no means isolated. In the first months of 1934 a new movement came on the scene, in which the laity took as important a place as the clergy, and which contained the germ of one future development. It might be called the synodical movement, because it took the form of local synods of clergy and laity who expressed their mind on the dangers that threatened the Church. It began in West Germany, where the Reformed were most powerful. Among them synods were a normal feature of Church life. On January 3rd and 4th a synod was held at Barmen, in Westphalia, which was attended by 320 elders and preachers, and also 167 representatives of congregations. After hearing a lecture by Karl Barth on the right understanding of the Reformed Confessions in the German Church, they agreed to a long statement which rejected various errors that were invading the Church. No human power could claim right when the message of the Gospel was concerned, nor could any human power claim absolute obedience. The responsibility of the community for the government of the Church could not be interfered with by an ecclesiastical Führer, nor could the totalitarian State "co-ordinate" the message of the Church with itself. The example was followed by a "Free Evangelical Synod" in the Rhineland on February 19th, which adopted the Barmen conclusion. The movement spread beyond the Reformed, and in March a synod was held in Berlin.

Meanwhile the Reichsbishop pursued his devious path, sometimes taking steps apparently designed to conciliate, but usually combining with them fresh actions calculated to cast fuel on the flames. Thus he did in February complete externally his "Spiritual Ministry" by calling to it two pastors who were strong "German Christians", Forsthoff of Coblenz and Engelke of Hamburg, while Weber was continued as commissar for the Reformed. But their position was more ornamental than real. The Reichsbishop still made his own laws, and on March 2nd, in his capacity of Reichsbishop, he appointed himself Provincial Bishop of the Church of the Old Prussian Union, which, as has been

said already, is the largest of all the German Evangelical Churches.

On March 24th the Reichsbishop made a new move which seemed to be designed to be of a conciliatory nature. He published a Good Friday sermon, the contents of which shewed how utterly impossible it was for his limited vision to comprehend the depth of conviction arrayed against him.

He asked his brethren to face the facts in the presence of the Crucified. The War and the year 1933 had shewn what History really is. God had given them a leader who had broken their bonds and completely renewed their life. The passionate desire of their people for complete union with the power of Nature had gripped the Church in order to forge National Socialism and the Church into a unity. With deep shame they must recognise that the Church had not the dynamic elasticity and buoyancy that was needed. It had become a middle-class affair that had completely lost the workers and the academic circles. When the National Socialist world of men, with its robust methods, took over the responsibility for the Church, they just chattered and complained. Owing to the long estrangement the unification of the Church could not always be accomplished "by Churchly means". Because pastors did not understand the Totality claim of the State they had no right to talk of martyrdom. The great mass of the people were astonished and embittered at this controversy among the clergy. How could they justify themselves to the Crucified for the disorder they had created?

The "Spiritual Ministry" were asked to grant an amnesty. They would gladly do so if they could be certain that there was the smallest guarantee that it would bring peace. It was not a question of a strife between two schools of thought but of the restoration of order. There was one simple way, for them to surrender to the Crucified everything that hindered God's Kingdom, especially that preachers of the Word should control that unruly member, the tongue. They must imitate their Master who had three

times asked that the cup be removed and give up their desire for martyrdom. "We must not be more pious than the Lord!"

He had asked his "Spiritual Ministry" to consult with the Bishops to see how far the pastors who had been removed could be reinstated. Of course, the cases which were really political must be distinguished from those that were merely ecclesiastical. They must concentrate on work in the parishes.

This strangest of all olive branches seemed to many who read it to approach to blasphemy. The Emergency League was not slow to answer. They wrote from Dortmund on April 5th, and reminded him how a few days before his letter a synod which had been held at that very place had been broken up by the police. Was this no breach of the 8th commandment? Were they Pharisees because they objected to the way in which the "German Christians"—whose protector he was—had turned so many pastors out? Was it "bourgeois" to insist that Reformation of the Church must be brought about by the methods of the Gospel and not of the world? What use was it to say that it was a question of order, and not of the Confession, when this very Easter message was a shattering example of an unevangelical outlook?

The Synod to which reference was made was a Synod held at Dortmund which marked a further stage in the Confessional movement. It claimed to be the constitutional Church of Westphalia and assumed the right to administer the Church funds. The claim was strongly based because the Synod represented a majority of the pastors of Westphalia, and the claim was tacitly admitted by the Government. Thus President Koch, the chairman, became the head of a legally constituted Church—an island of confessionalism in the middle of the shattered Prussian Church, and a focus round which "Confessionals" in other parts of Prussia could rally.

The Reichsbishop, seeing that his Easter Message had missed fire, tried in a muddled kind of way to put

himself right with the Opposition, by issuing a message of peace on April 13th recalling the laws of January 4th which had caused so much disturbance. He also said that he would not carry through the measures initiated against Church officials, in so far as these were concerned with Church politics. If, however, there was any question of State politics, they would be carried through.

The decision about which cases came under the head of Church politics and which under that of State politics would be made by the legal member of the "Spiritual Ministry". Moreover the Reichsbishop reserved to himself the right to decide which proceedings should at any time be renewed. This was cold comfort. The distinction between Church and State politics was the whole question at issue, and it was plain that the Church Government wanted to keep the Church in entire dependence, using a sort of cat and mouse policy.

The Opposition were not likely to find any fresh hope when the name of the legal member of the ministry was announced on April 19th. It was Dr. Jäger, who, though a parson's son, had wrought such havoc as commissar of the Prussian Church in the previous year. He was described as "Rechtswalter", and his authority was comprehensive. He was to be the representative of the Reichsbishop in all questions of Church politics and head of the Church Chancery. It was soon to appear that he was the power behind the throne, and that he was prepared to use it ruthlessly. He remained a member of the Nazi Supreme Council; and it was explained that any opposition to his orders would be opposition to the State.

The Ulm Conference

But the Confessionals had, by this time, made up their mind that further parleying with the ecclesiastical dictatorship was useless. On the 22nd of April they held a conference at Ulm, in Württemberg, which marked out the lines of future action. It was the most representative

gathering of "Confessionals" that had yet been held. The declaration that was issued was signed by Bishop Meiser of Bavaria, Bishop Wurm of Stuttgart, President Koch of Oeynhausen, Dr. Niemöller of Berlin, Dr. Flor, the jurist, of Leipzig, Dr. Asmussen of Altona, and they were supported by men from all parts of Germany, Saxony, Hanover, Gotha, Oldenburg, the Saar, Hesse, Lübeck, and Silesia.

It declared that the profession of a wish for peace on the part of the Reichs Church Government was contradicted by the facts, notably by a recent attempt to override the legitimate Church Government of Württemberg. What had happened was that an attempt had been made by the local Nazis to get rid of the Bishop, Dr. Wurm, by questionable means. The Reichs Governor had assisted in this attempt, and summoned the Reichsbishop to his assistance. Though he neither saw Dr. Wurm, nor spoke with him, he forbade him to summon his provincial council, which he wished to do, in order to put before them the true state of the case. The Ulm declaration maintained that the Reichsbishop's action was directed, not towards peace, but towards destroying one of the last bulwarks of a Church true to the Confession of Faith in Germany. It was, moreover, quite illegal. All Württemberg Evangelicals were urged to stand behind their Bishop.

The most striking thing in the Ulm declaration was the statement with which it began. "The assembled representatives," it said, "of the Württemberg and Bavarian provincial Churches, of the Free Synods in the Rhineland in Westphalia and in Brandenburg, as well as Confessional Christians in other parts of Germany, make this declaration before the whole of Christendom, as the constitutional Evangelical Church of Germany." This was a new note, and one that startled even some Confessionals. The Opposition had ceased to be an opposition and was becoming a Church. The statement was read from the pulpit by Bishop Meiser in full canonicals, in order to indicate the gravity of the step taken.

Not long after the Ulm declaration a similar attack was made on Hanover which was the most conservative of the Lutheran Churches, whose leader was the cautious Bishop Marahrens. The Church Senate, which was dominated by German Christians, decreed the incorporation of the Church of Hanover in the Reichskirche. Dr. Marahrens refused to agree, because it was, he declared, impossible to place a Church bound to the Confession under a Church Government not so bound. He was in favour, he said, of the unity of the German Evangelical Church. But it must be a real unity. The only way was by the amalgamation of all Lutheran Churches inside the German Evangelical Church. The same was true of the Reformed and the United Church. The transcending of the Confessions could only come from within, not by external organisation.

Dr. Marahrens' stand nullified the incorporation of Hanover. Despite his refusal to sign the deed (some German Christian signed "in the Bishop's unavoidable absence"), he was not removed from office. When he appealed for support to his 1,000 pastors, 750 stood by him, and only 35 refused. So Hanover remained "intact".

Other Churches were less favoured in their attempts to resist incorporation into the Reichs Church. During the summer Saxony and Oldenburg were brought into line. In Schleswig-Holstein the majority of the clergy were Confessionals and they had a moderate "German Christian" Bishop. There was great hope that this would become an "intact" Church, constitutionally ordered. But the Reichsbishop intervened and the local Bishop surrendered. Schleswig-Holstein was incorporated.

The Confessional Church Arrives

The steady destruction of constitutional authority spurred the Confessionals to further united action. A decisive step was taken when a Confessional Synod of

the whole German Evangelical Church was held at Barmen on May 29th to 31st.

These representatives of Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches found themselves agreed in asserting that the unification of the German Evangelical Church could only come out of the word of God in faith through the Holy Ghost. They summoned all the congregations to stand behind their leaders in prayer and faith. They divided their affirmation into theological and juridical sections. Under the former they based themselves on the first two articles of the Church Constitution confirmed by the Government of the Reich on July 14th, 1933, which declared that the immovable basis of the German Evangelical Church is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is witnessed to in the Scripture and brought out into new light in the Confessions of the Reformation. Further the German Evangelical Church is made up of local Churches. These principles had been betrayed by the German Christians and the Reich Church Government. They rejected the idea that other events and powers, figures and truths could be recognised as sources of revelation, in addition to the Word of God. The Church could not alter its message to suit temporary philosophical and political convictions. It could not accept a leader furnished with external authority. Nor could it agree that the State should take control of the whole of human life and act on behalf of the Church. The Work and Word of the Lord could not be subordinated to the plans and schemes of individuals. Under the heading of the legal position it asserted that the Church government had forfeited any claim to be the constitutional government of the Church because it had contravened the articles of the Constitution referred to above. The Confessional Synod was therefore compelled to summon all who held to the Confessions to secure that the Church should be rightly governed. It is impossible to separate the outward order from the Confession of Faith. The introduction of the worldly *Führerprinzip* would not unify the Church. A hierarchical

formation contradicted the Reformation Confession. They must see to it that the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and not that of a worldly dominion, prevailed in the Church.

The declaration also outlined various steps of a practical kind for building up the Church on a spiritual basis as regards both the clergy and the laity. It was of the first importance to build up the confessional community as a spiritual organism. To this end the community must learn again to make Sunday worship the centre point of its life. The meaning of the Sacraments must be grasped afresh, and every means must be taken to secure that all religious activities were worked with the clear aim of forwarding the Confessional Church. The foundations of a financial organisation were laid.

The Confessional Church foreshadowed at Ulm came into definite existence at Barmen. There was no longer any possibility of compromise with the Reichsbishop. The action of the Dahlem Synod was a turning point. It was an absolute rejection of "*Gleichschaltung*", and a solemn affirmation that the Church, not the State, must determine the Church's life, and therefore be the architect of its own organisation. From now on it was definitely recognised that the structure of the Church is not a merely administrative question but something closely interwoven with the essence of the Faith.

The Synod and the Oath

The Reichsbishop's answer was to push on with the project of holding a National Synod which would consist only of reliable Nazis. When the Synod met in Berlin on August 9th it chiefly distinguished itself by transferring all its powers to the Reichsbishop and by enacting an oath of loyalty to Hitler which would have to be taken by all pastors. This was an ingenious step in Müller and Jäger's campaign for identifying loyalty to God with loyalty to Hitler. The great cry of the Nazis was that the protesting pastors were "reactionary". When asked what

the meaning of "reaction" was, the answer of the Party was quite simple in that world of slogans. "Reaction is anything that does not work with us." The oaths promulgated by the Synod were of two kinds, one for clergymen, the other for Church officials.

The clerical oath required that the clergyman should swear before God that as one called to minister in the office of preaching, both in his present and in every other spiritual office, so far as beseemed a minister of the Gospel of the German Evangelical Church, he would be true and obedient to the leader of the German People and State, Adolf Hitler, and dedicate himself to Germany with every sacrifice and service which became a German Evangelical Man. The oath went on to demand that he would conscientiously accept all the orders of the German Evangelical Church; and lastly, serve the community where he might be placed as a true preacher and pastor with all his powers in truth and love. The oath for Church officials was in parallel terms.

This apple of discord produced new disturbances immediately. The Council of Brethren—which was the executive body or standing committee of the Confessional Synod—refused to recognise the legality or orthodoxy of the National Synod and its acts. They objected in particular to the proposed oath because it muddled up things that belonged respectively to the State, to the Church as a whole, and to the local community. A new oath threw discredit on the Ordination vows that every clergyman had to take already.

Bishop Meiser and his Church Council in Bavaria produced a reasoned statement which shewed what a dangerous innovation the oath was. In the first place, the whole idea of imposing an oath was foreign to the practice of the Church, whose Master had said "Swear not at all". The State could impose an oath in case of necessity, even on pastors, in so far as they had duties external to the Church. Thus the oath imposed on Catholic Bishops by the Concordat that they would be loyal to the German Reich

and care for the interests of the State was perfectly regular. But, when the Church itself demanded an oath of loyalty to the State, it was stepping outside its proper sphere. All that the Church could rightly do was to ask the clergyman to take a vow not to men, nor to an ecclesiastical organisation, but to Christ and the Eternal Word of God, which was what the Ordination vow did. The clergyman bound himself to "the revealed teaching of the holy Gospel". To require the pastor as an essential element of his *spiritual* office to be true and obedient to Hitler laid an impossible burden on conscience. To mix up his spiritual duty and his duty as a citizen was quite un-Lutheran. This oath subordinated the preaching of the Gospel to the commands of a worldly authority. It was peculiarly hard to make clergymen who obeyed their consciences appear to be disloyal citizens, and to brand them as rebels. (This, of course, was precisely the aim of the whole proceeding.) They were perfectly ready to take an oath of loyalty to the State as citizens.

It would not have been so impossible if the phrase "in so far as beseems a minister of the Gospel" had been a limiting phrase. Dr. Jäger had made it clear that it had exactly the opposite character.

Another difficulty was, as has been said, that it threw doubt on the sincerity of the Ordination vows.

One of the most widely felt objections was, of course, the requirement to accept all the acts of the Reich Church Government, which many rejected utterly as irreligious and illegal. There was a widespread revolt against identifying God with Hitler and Bishop Müller.

Not content with the disturbance created by the proposed oath, Dr. Jäger—for he was the real power in the Church during this summer—moved forward on other fronts.

Another step was taken when the Reich Church Administration issued a decree applying to the Bavarian and Württemberg Provincial Churches the law that made the Reich Church the sole source of legislation. Both Churches refused to acknowledge the validity of the decree, and the

Frankfurter Zeitung published their protests. Bishop Wurm sent to his pastors in Württemberg a memorandum declaring that he could not accept the decree. He was ready to promote the great work of the Führer in creating in the Church as elsewhere, a really united German people. "But," he said, "we must plainly state that, in view of its proceedings in the past, we do not believe in the ability of the present Reich Church regime to establish peace, and that, in consequence of our experiences, we cannot place any faith in its promise to adhere to the Reformation basis of the Evangelical Church." He claimed that he alone had authority to issue orders in his Church. He was unable to do so at the moment because his office was occupied by a commissar of Dr. Jäger. The excuse given in Berlin was that there had been financial mismanagement. The good Württembergers, with whom the Bishop was very popular, resented both the allegation and the treatment of Dr. Wurm, and some local Nationalist officials were roughly handled by the crowd. His clergy stood solidly behind him.

It was Dr. Meiser's turn next. He resisted the attempt to merge the Bavarian Church in the Reichskirche as strenuously as Dr. Wurm had done. On September 16th he preached in S. Matthew's Church, the principal Protestant Church of Munich, to an overflowing congregation on the text "We can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth." In the course of his sermon he read a resolution of the Evangelical pastors of Munich which vigorously defended the honour of Dr. Wurm, the Württemberg Bishop against the false accusation of having used public funds for purposes other than those of the Church. They told how Dr. Wurm had the Württemberg parishes solidly behind him, and that he continued to carry out his office of Bishop of Württemberg and to seek, in loyal co-operation with their own Provincial Bishop, the creation of a German Evangelical Church which would benefit their people. A moving scene followed. The congregation, having sung "*Ein' feste Burg*" left the Church

still singing, and proceeded, some 2,000 strong, to Bishop Meiser's residence. Tumultuous cheering brought Bishop Meiser to the balcony, where he affirmed his own allegiance to the Führer and the Third Reich. They remembered Hitler, he said, in their prayers every day. The struggle was not political but ecclesiastical, and arose over the spiritual leadership of the Church. The crowd sang "Deutschland über Alles" and the Horst Wessel song, but were dispersed by Storm troopers. Whereupon they moved off to the Brown House, the Nazi headquarters, when they sang Luther's hymn again.

Similar demonstrations took place in Augsburg and Nuremberg, when Bishop Meiser preached there. Before demonstrations of this kind Bishop Müller's attack collapsed. Bavaria and Württemberg remained "intact"—the "solid South" of German Lutheranism—though Dr. Wurm was for some time placed under protective arrest in his house at Stuttgart; and later Bishop Meiser was also placed under house arrest.

The installation of Dr. Müller, which had been constantly postponed—was now drawing near, and a new objection began to be revealed. On September 19th the Reichsbishop made a speech at Hanover which startled Catholics and Protestants alike. He declared that the logical consequence of "One State, one Nation, one Church" must be a "German National Church free from Rome." It is true that he afterwards explained that he had been misreported. But the statement was too much in line with certain tendencies in the German Christian movement, especially in Thüringen, for the statement to gain much credence. He coupled this with a fierce attack on the Jews, and criticism of those who said that Christ was a Jew. The State, he said, was bound to interfere if the Church did not keep order itself. According to the letter of the law all the regional Churches were now incorporated in the Reich Church, when a law was decided. Anyone who could not co-operate in the building of his Church and "fight as we do in the Third Reich,

should keep quiet or stand aside. If he does not, I must force him to."

The suggestion of a Rome free Catholic Church immediately aroused opposition, not merely on "Confessional" grounds but because the opponents saw what kind of Church it would be. It would be the Church described by Rosenberg as the task of the 20th century, a Church which embodied the soul of the race, the removal of "the frightful Crucifix", the abandonment of the Old Testament, the rejection of the belief in the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the World" and the eclipse of "Paulinism". As Dr. Meiser observed, the true Christianity which existed in Protestant, Catholic and Free Churches alike would disappear in a mix-up based on Nordic-Christian religion. Point was given to these criticisms by a declaration of Dr. Jäger's that the clergy must find new ways of preaching in keeping with the Nazi ideology. Had not Herr Hitler himself recently declared in his speech on culture at Nuremberg, when he contrasted the *weltanschauliche* elements that were "anchored in a people's blood" with "artificial injections" from outside, the true character of which had not been perceived because they had gone on for centuries, and which must now be rejected. After all, the critics had read the "Myth of the 20th Century" and they recognised the Rosenbergian touch. It was far more than theological differences between Christians or Church organisations that was at stake in the proposal for a "National Church" that now reared its head.

The Reich Primate Installed

On September 23rd, 1934, the Reichsbishop was at last installed in his office as Primate of the German Evangelical Church. The ceremony took place in the Protestant Cathedral in Berlin. There was a great display of swastika flags and a forest of arms were raised in the Nazi salute. But two things were lacking. One was that

the Reichsbishop had never been consecrated to his office (as Bishop Meiser had not failed to remind him). The other was the absence of all the Bishops who had been in office before Müller appeared on the scene, except the Bishop of Baden. All the rest were of Bishop Müller's own creation. Neither Bishop Marahrens, nor Bishop Meiser, nor Bishop Wurm were there. The Reichsbishop recited the Creed and made his vow in which he declared that he was willing to carry out the office of Lutheran Reichsbishop in accordance with the Holy Gospel and as Dr. Martin Luther had shewn it to us, and as the Confessional writings of one Church held it before our eyes. Curiously enough this last phrase about the Confessions did not occur in the first statement issued to the Press!

It was a wet day, not very auspicious for the consecration of the new Ecclesiastical Dictatorship. And possibly for that reason there was no great crowd in the Lustgarten when Dr. Müller addressed the people from the steps of the Dom. But, while the inauguration was taking place in the Dom, the churches of the Confessional Movement were crammed. At Dahlem they sang hymns in the rain, outside the Church where Dr. Niemöller was reading a declaration claiming that the Confessional Church was the rightful German Evangelical Church, because Dr. Müller and Dr. Jäger had declared themselves in favour of a National Church which would teach a hybrid Nordic-Christian religion, and so forfeited all right to obedience.

That very little desire for peace was to be found at Church headquarters was illustrated by the new attacks made in October by Dr. Jäger on Württemberg and Bavaria. Dr. Wurm was once more placed under house-arrest by the Württemberg Ministry of the Interior, as were several of his most important clergymen. When Dr. Wurm announced his intention of continuing to carry out his duties, police were placed outside his house night and day. At the same time one new decree divided the Evangelical Church into two halves, one for Old Bavaria and one for Franconia. Another removed Bishop Meiser

from office. The Theological Faculty of Erlangen protested vehemently against these uncalled for acts of aggression, as did Dr. Meiser himself. He urged his people to fight on, but to use only spiritual weapons. Dr. Jäger himself suddenly appeared at the Church offices in Munich with the Secret Police. He locked the doors, allowed no one to leave or enter, confiscated the official organ of the Church and other papers, and announced the deposition of Dr. Meiser.

The strongest feelings were aroused. A crowd gathered outside the Bishop's house, and, having sung "*Ein' feste Burg*", was addressed for a few moments by the Bishop. Afterwards some of the more ardent spirits repaired to the front of the Brown House, where they shouted "Shame! Pfui!" and spat on the ground in unison.

On Sunday, October 14th, Dr. Jäger's aggression was announced from all the Protestant pulpits of Bavaria. The methods he had employed were described as tantamount to an act of war. An appeal was made to pastors and parishes to refuse obedience to the Church administration which was unconstitutional and a violation of the Faith. Once more crowds demonstrated outside Dr. Meiser's house and a service was held in the courtyard.

Shortly after the installation of the Reichsbishop an event occurred which threw a light on the divided counsels within the Government itself when the Church was concerned. The *Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz*, a paper in close touch with the Foreign Office, published a statement designed to minimise the importance of the Church conflict. The few outstanding causes of friction with the Roman Catholic Church about the Concordat would soon be removed. The position of the Protestants was more complicated, owing to a chain of misunderstandings. "The new State," it was said, "wants a reconciliation and it wants peace with the Churches of both Confessions." Oddly enough the Ministry of the Interior and the Church regime, where Nazi influence was strong, knew nothing about the issuing of this statement.

The cause of Dr. Meiser was taken up throughout the Confessional Church. A manifesto was read describing what had happened at Munich, and denouncing the Reich Church Government for fighting truth with violence—while it talked of Bible and Confession. "The 'Reichsbishop' Ludwig Müller and his 'legal administrator' are responsible for the devastation of the Church. Through them Satan is accomplishing his work!" The manifesto was signed by Dr. Koch, as head of the Confessional Synod.

The political element in these moves was clearly evident. The notorious Julius Streicher instigated the attack on Meiser and the division of the Church in two. Neither General von Epp, the Statthalter, nor the Bavarian Ministry of Cult knew anything of it beforehand, and the General went to Berlin to protest to Hitler without much result. In Württemberg it was freely given out by the Party that Dr. Wurm had been removed because he had opposed the Führer, who had ordered the creation of a single Church, and had declared that doctrine was not touched. Dr. Wurm's pastors thought their Bishop a better judge of this last point than the Chancellor.

Dr. Jäger's conduct was so monstrous that a reaction began in the ranks of the "German Christians" themselves. Dr. Kinder, their leader, and several members of the administration of the movement demanded his resignation. He thereupon dismissed three leading German Christian officials. Dr. Engelke, whom Bishop Müller had appointed as his deputy, resigned, and several German Christian Bishops supported him. On the other hand the Thuringian section of the German Christian movement came out with a demand for a German National Nordic Church, including Protestants and Catholics. The feelings of the Bavarians themselves were shewn by a mass demonstration of 10,000 Protestants at the Adolf Hitler Platz in Nuremberg in favour of Dr. Meiser, which led up to a conference between 150 pastors with Julius Streicher, who was reputed to have apologised for having compared the Eucharist with (mythical!) Jewish ritual murders.

On October 20th the Reichs Confessional Synod took a further decisive step at Dahlem. They issued a message in which they said that, in view of the fact that the Reichs Church Government was now shattered, they had formed new organs for the government of the Church. They summoned the Council of Brethren to take over the leadership of the German Evangelical Church, and selected from it the Council of the German Evangelical Church to conduct its business. They summoned the Christian parishes, their pastors, and elders, to refuse instructions from the Reich Church Government, and to stand by the Confessional Synod. They forwarded this declaration to the Reich Government, asking them to take cognizance of the situation and to recognize that in matters affecting the Church in regard to its doctrine and organization the Church is qualified to judge and to decide without prejudice to the State's right of supervision. This declaration was signed by all the delegates, and was solemnly read out by Dr. Koch, the President of the Confessional Church, in one of the Dahlem Churches. As if to clinch the matter, Dr. Koch, assisted by Dr. Jakobi and Dr. Niemöller afterwards ordained a number of young candidates for the ministry. The moderation of the statement is worthy of note. It is quite decisive; but it recognises that the State has certain rights, so long as it does not invade the theological sphere.

Exit Dr. Jäger

If the action of the Confessional Church stood alone, it might not have created much impression. But, taken along with the popular revolt in Bavaria and Württemberg, it created a situation of which the Government could hardly fail to take notice. A section of the German Christians who were really at bottom Churchmen, headed by Dr. Kinder himself, turned against Dr. Jäger. Herr Hess, the Führer's deputy, and even Julius Streicher, urged Government action in the direction of appeasement, and

they conferred with the Führer, in the absence of Müller and Dr. Jäger. One sign that Government circles were hesitating was the constant postponement of the Reichsbishop's visit to Hitler to inform him formally of his installation. Almost a month had passed, and Müller was still excluded from "the Presence", where usually his access was easy. It was given out that Müller was indisposed.

At last it seemed as though the ceremony at which the Reichsbishop would take his personal oath to Hitler would really take place. On October 25th the "German Christian" Bishops assembled in Berlin in readiness to support the Reichsbishop, who had appointed them, only to learn that the ceremony had been postponed indefinitely. At their meeting, at which they were informed of this decision, desperate efforts were made by the Reichsbishop to retain his hold on the Church. The first step of importance was the resignation of Dr. Jäger himself from his "Church political functions". He euphemistically gave as his reason that he had now substantially completed his task. The real reason obviously was that he had lost the confidence of Hitler and of the party. At the same time Müller appointed a Council of Bishops to assist him in the place of Jäger, Dietrich, Bishop of Nassau, Kuhlewein, Bishop of Saxony, and Paussem, Bishop of Schleswig-Holstein.

The tension was still further lessened by the release of Dr. Meiser and Dr. Wurm from "house arrest".

On October 30th they, together with Bishop Marahrens, had a two hours talk with Hitler, who told them that he took no further interest in the dispute and would leave the Church to deal with its own problems. What exactly this was to mean only time could shew. At first sight it seemed to mark an epoch, as the final withdrawal of the claim of the State to interfere in Church affairs. Of course, it also left the field free for other faiths on an equal basis. Some sections of the Party were not displeased with the separation of Church and State which

seemed to have arrived, because they could now push the German Faith movement more energetically.

To the Confessionals the decision brought great encouragement, even though their request to be regarded as the true Evangelical Church went unheeded. Anyhow they had got rid of Dr. Jäger by their steadfastness; Müller's position was very much weakened; and they had found a restored unity. The three Lutheran Bishops agreed to the formation of a small Executive Council for the Confessional Church. Dr. Koch was President; Dr. Asmussen, of Hamburg, Theological Adviser. Dr. Breit, who was in close contact with Dr. Meiser represented the Lutherans, Karl Barth the Reformed, and Dr. Niemöller the Union Church. Dr. Fiedler of Leipzig became Legal Adviser.

Dr. Meiser had a great reception when he visited Nuremberg to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Luther's translation of the Bible. 20,000 Protestants from Franconia and Upper Bavaria flocked to welcome him. But as so often, the local Party authorities shewed themselves less friendly than the Government. A public meeting in the Adolf Hitler Platz was forbidden, and Dr. Wurm had similar difficulties. The separation of Church and State was not going to be such an easy matter after all. The Regional Governor of Württemberg indeed definitely announced that the retirement of the Nazi party from the struggle was only temporary. The signs pointed in the direction of supposing that Hitler—as so often—had just made an improvisation to meet a momentary difficulty, and was in no way bound by it. The great question of the hour was, would the Reichsbishop resign? That he had fallen out of favour was indicated when, owing to the intervention of the highest authority, he was unable to prevent a great Confessional demonstration in Berlin on November 8th, at which the Reichsbishop's regime was openly rejected. Dr. Koch made a fighting speech, going to the root of the matter, when he declared that the 1,000 or more pastors who had already suffered had done

so, because they were opposing false prophets who preached the doctrine of blood and soil and a racial mysticism.

Many rallied to the Confessional Church, including Bishop Zänker of Silesia, who brought 850 out of his 900 pastors with him.

On November 6th the four Lutheran Bishops, Meiser, Wurm, Marahrens and Zänker wrote to Ludwig Müller telling him that, despite all warnings, he had attempted to impose an unevangelical Papal system on the South German Churches, that the highest organs of the State had now recognised that this was illegal, and that peace could now only be restored by his withdrawal from office.

Similar demands came from President Koch for the Council of Brethren, from the Missionary societies, from the Gustav Adolf Verein, from the Martin Luther Bund, and from many theological professors at Berlin, Breslau, Erlangen, Giessen, Göttingen, Greifswald, Halle, Heidelberg, Jena, Kiel, Königsberg, Marburg, Münster, Rostock and Tübingen. Müller replied briefly to President Koch, explaining that he could not resign, because the Bishops at their recent conferences were united in thinking that his resignation would increase the unrest. (The Bishops were, as has already been pointed out, all, save one, his own creatures.) He gave as another reason that his responsibility for the Churchless masses made it necessary for him to stick to his post. Heil Hitler!

In a pastoral letter he developed the same themes. He abused the Professors because there were so many disagreements among them. The people, he said, were tired of all their Church politics, and quoted as proof the ban issued by the Minister against publishing anything about the Church struggle except what was officially published by his (Müller's) office!

The professors replied that they might disagree about many things, but they were all agreed that Müller must go. And others of his correspondents pointed out, once more, that it was the Reichsbishop himself who was at the bottom of all the trouble.

The Reichsbishop was fighting a rearguard battle. It was announced on November 25th that he had rescinded all his decrees since the beginning of the year which would stand in the way of "a constitutional meeting of the Church Senate of the Old Prussian Church". But this obscure statement was merely prevarication. Actions taken by his orders shewed that his dictatorial habit was unchanged.

The Inauguration of the Provisional Church Administration

The Confessional Church were not deceived. They did not content themselves with verbal protests to the Reichsbishop, but greatly encouraged by the growth of feeling aroused by Müller's arbitrary and violent actions they proceeded steadily with their work of building up an alternative Church Government, which should be ready to take over when the Reichsbishop disappeared from the scene. At the end of November the Confessional Synod announced that, in view of the Reichsbishop's refusal to resign, the Council of Brethren of the German Evangelical Church and the leaders of the Provincial Churches of Hanover, Württemberg and Bavaria had agreed that the Provisional Church Government of the Evangelical Church should be placed in the hands of the following—Bishop Marahrens, President Koch, Dr. Breit of Bavaria, Dr. Humburg of Barmen, and Dr. Flor, the legal adviser. The Provisional Church Government would aim at building up a united Church on the basis of the Confessions. Its relation to the various constituent Churches would be determined by the Constitution of July 11th, 1933. Until such time as a National Synod could be brought into being, the Council of Brethren would act in its stead. On the 23rd of November the new Provisional Church Government issued a statement asking for the support of Churches, parishes, and religious organisations.

The Nazi party were enraged by this bold step. Hitler's promise to leave the Church to settle its own affairs was

quietly shelved, and arrangements were made to arrest all the Confessional leaders. But, in view of the approaching plebiscite in the Saar and the need for an appearance of national unity, overt action was postponed, under pressure from the moderate elements in the Government.

The Reichsbishop, just to show that he was not finished yet, published an announcement forbidding all pastors and Church officials to recognise the Provisional Church Government, which he described as a private undertaking that had no right to exist. Dr. Frick, the Minister of the Interior, backed Müller up by threatening to withdraw financial help.

Thus, at the end of 1934, it was no longer a controversy between the Church Government and an Opposition. Two claimants for the leadership of the Church stood face to face, each ready to undertake the task to the exclusion of the other. Each side had its difficulties. That of the Reichsbishop was the absence of any following in the Church. The "German Christians" had during the year sunk to a low ebb. The strength of the Provisional Government consisted in the support of a majority of the pastors and the most profoundly religious elements in the Church itself. Its weakness lay in a failure so far to reach a theological and religious unity which would transcend the divisions of Confession. The unity of the various elements was real, but it rested more on opposition to the violent and unconstitutional methods of the Reichsbishop than on anything positive. There were still many who did not yet perceive that his regime was merely a device used by powers in the background for subduing the Evangelical Church to the Nazi ideology. The underlying issue, Christianity versus Heathenism, did not yet stand clear. Hence there was always the danger of a split in the Confessional Front between those who thought first of all of preserving and more deeply understanding the Faith and those who were primarily concerned to preserve the local Churches against a centralised tyranny. The coalition between the Councils of Brethren and the

Regional Churches was undoubtedly a strengthening of the Confessional forces. But it gave great influence to those who continued to believe that an accommodation with the State was possible. The difference between the two elements in the Provincial Church Government was not a division of theology or faith so much as a difference in tactics and in assessing the real forces at work.

1934 was a year of gallant struggle for religious freedom—but the struggle took place chiefly in the constitutional sphere and the realm of Church government. It was a struggle, the significance of which Christians outside Germany had become increasingly aware, as had been clearly shewn when the "Universal Christian Council" met at Fanö in Denmark. The Youth section of the Conference—less cautious than their elders—went to the root of the matter, when it condemned the denial of individual freedom in circumstances where such "freedom could not possibly be dangerous to the State". What they overlooked was that they were dealing with a State founded on the denial of freedom, because it was a State in which a Party claimed—and ruthlessly enforced—the right to control the minds, no less than the bodies, of all its citizens.

The *Times* summed up informed foreign opinion when it described Dr. Marahrens and Dr. Koch as engaged in a battle for liberty of conscience which "still demands their undiminished and united effort and the moral support of all who care for the triumph of Christian principles."

The Reichsbishop Fades Out

When 1935 opened the Provisional Church Government seemed to be on the road to victory. The Reichsbishop had failed to crush it. At the same time he remained in office, though deprived of much power when he lost Dr. Jäger, and with diminished prestige. Various projects were mooted for resolving the schism. One was that Dr. Marahrens should become Reichsbishop. Another was that a Cabinet Minister should be appointed to look

after the affairs of the Evangelical Church. For the time being nothing came of any of these proposals. The German Christian minority refused to surrender the power they had obtained. Behind them stood the inner ring of the Nazi party. The Confessionals, with increasing firmness, adopted the standpoint that only a Church completely free from State control in religious matters,—which included the organisation of the Church itself—could claim the loyalty of true Christians. If the leaders of the Lutheran Provincial Churches were unwilling to go all the way along this road, they were continually being driven back to the Confessional fold by acts of State aggression. Thus in the last days of 1934 the *Reichsbote* was confiscated because it contained a very moderate article by Bishop Marahrens.

The first question calling out for settlement was the position of the Reichsbishop himself. In February the Provisional Church Government presented a sort of ultimatum to Dr. Frick. But a new turn was given to the affair when the German Christians revolted against their tactless and prevaricating protagonist, whose only aim seemed to be to preserve his own position. In the early days of February, he was informed by his militant followers that they had no further use for him. He refused to resign on the ground that he still had the confidence of Hitler. To which they replied that he had better go and see. When, on February 27th, the long postponed interview took place at Berchtesgaden, it provided but cold comfort for Ludwig Müller. He was told that the Ministry of the Interior refused to continue to pay the money earmarked for his Spiritual Ministry, on the ground that he had not been able to rebut the arguments of leading jurists that his whole organisation had no legal basis, and that, therefore, in the future, the finances of the Church would be administered by a committee independent of himself. As a matter of fact he had lost a number of cases in the courts, when pastors had sued him for unlawful withholding of their salaries. The Reichsbishop continued to hold his title—

and what was very important, his salary—but by the end of March Ludwig Müllur had disappeared as an effective force, though subsequently he came to the surface from time to time to make some egregious utterance.

But if the Reichsbishop had faded out, it by no means followed that his place was taken by the Provisional Church Government. They found themselves, indeed, faced more definitely by the naked power of the State, owing to the collapse of the smoke screen of a "German Christian" Government. The fundamental opposition was clearly revealed when the Provisional Church Government, now that Müller was to all intents and purposes out of the way, moved forward from the constitutional question into the realm of ideas and beliefs. They were moved to take this step by observing the alarming growth of propaganda on behalf of the new Heathenism in the Press, in the theatre, but especially in the schools. The Provisional Government, Marahrens, Koch, Breit, Humburg, and Fiedler, published on February 21st a summons to the parishes of the German Evangelical Church to be on their guard against the new religion which made God in the image of man, which said "the God, which we worship, would not exist, if it were not for our Soul and Blood". They must make their choice between this heathenism and Christianity. If they decided for the latter, parents must secure that their children were brought up on the Bible and the Catechism and taken regularly to church. At the same time they defined the errors of the Racial Religious movement, which had sprung from the Association for Making a German Church, from the German Faith Movement of Arthur Dinter and Hauer, from Rosenberg's Mythos, and radical groups such as those of Ludendorff and his wife. This religion put the Revelation made through the Apostles and Prophets on one side, and set in its place the Voice of the Divine in the Blood, in the Vitality of a pure Race, in the Rhythm of Nature. It was pantheist, naturalistic, and ultimately atheist. It denounced the Old Testament as racially foreign, and Paul as a Jewish

Rabbi. In close kinship to the world of ideas of Liberalism and Free thought, it merely saw in Jesus a morally impressive person of Aryan origin. Sin was any offence against the Blood, not against the Holy Ghost. The Nordic man believed in his own strength, not in the Grace of God. The ethics of the German Heathen were determined by Race. Racial honour was his highest category, and it excluded Christian love, which was condemned as weakness and humanitarianism.

The reply of the State to the reading of this outspoken utterance in certain churches on March 11th was not long in coming. On March 12th Rust, the Minister of Education and the Prussian Finance Minister, issued a decree providing for a reduction of the Church Tax in Prussia by one-fifth. Dr. Frick made a violent speech on March 14th at Lübeck, in which he suddenly declared the Reichsbishop's position to be legally established, though his department had recently refused to give Müller financial support on the ground that his position was illegal. It was but another example of the complete irresponsibility of the Nazi regime. At the same time Dr. Frick announced another decree creating special departments for the administration of Church funds. The conclusion was obvious at last. The State wished to identify itself with the Rosenberg heathenism. As if to clinch the matter 700 pastors were either arrested or put under house-arrest for having read the manifesto, among them Dr. Niemöller and Dr. Jakobi, while 5,000 Confessional pastors, who had not received the manifesto in time to read it, were warned by the Secret Police not to do so.

Dr. Koch, of Bad Oeynhausen, issued on March 18th a brief but pregnant summons to prayer for the arrested pastors, for their wives and families and for their parishes. He announced that the number in prison was 500. "When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." Dr. Meiser and Dr. Wurm responded to this appeal by some plain speaking in a letter to Herr Frick. As they had had nothing to do with drawing up the appeal of the

Provisional Church Government, it would not be read in their churches. At the same time they recognised that the Provisional Church Government had had good cause for their action. Anti-Christian forces were separating the Churches from the movement. No pastoral influence was allowed in the work camps. The refusal to allow the use of any public buildings for the refutation of the new Germanic Mythus constituted a fundamental attack by the State on the Church's Creed. Peace had been disturbed, not by the Church, but by continued attacks on the deposit of faith which was held in common by both Confessions (i.e., Catholic and Protestant). It was most disastrous that a magnificent and far-reaching struggle for Germany's honour, freedom and future, in which many earnest Evangelicals desired to take their share, had received a new interpretation, when it was represented in certain circles as the struggle of a Germanic Mythus against the Biblical belief in Christ. There was no doubt that the authors of the Appeal were in no way inimical to the State.

So great was the disturbance that pressure was brought to bear by moderate members of the Government, with the result that a conference took place between Frick and President Koch at the Ministry of the Interior—in itself a not unimportant recognition of the status, or at any rate, influence of the Provisional Church Government. But it led to nothing. The determination of the pastors to read the manifesto remained unbroken, with the consequence that a wave of arrests followed. The concentration camp was now used more freely, instead of mere house-arrest or confinement for a few hours in prison. The solidarity of the Confessional movement was deepened. The practice grew up of reading out from the pulpit the names of pastors in prison. Dr. Marahrens and Dr. Breit journeyed to Darmstadt to shew their sympathy with four Hessian pastors who had been placed in the concentration camp at Dachau because they refused to recognise the "German Christian" Bishop, Dr. Dieterich. When they were about

to enter the church, they were arrested, but were released a few hours afterwards. When this happened to such respected leaders as the two Lutheran Bishops, it is not, perhaps, surprising that three Saxon pastors were put into a concentration camp because they asked for intercessions for the Hessian pastors at Dachau, mentioning them by name. Other arrests of pastors followed in Franconia and in Bremen. When the prisoners were put into the concentration camp, their heads were shorn, and they were put into the uniform of convicts and set to forced labour. In all these four districts fanatical Nazi Governors were in power; and they refused to listen to the appeals of higher authority.

A struggle was no doubt going on behind the scenes, but in the month of April arrests continued, so that at the end of the month the number in prison had reached 35. No impression was produced on the Confessional pastors who continued to read out the names of those in prison and to ask for prayers for them. Their firmness was strengthened by the signs, which now began to multiply, that the next move would be not merely repressive but aggressive—a definite encouragement of the German Faith Movement.

On April 26th a vast demonstration was staged at the Sportpalast in Berlin, a building that neither the Roman Catholic nor the Protestant Churches were allowed to use. 15,000 people, the majority of them young, assembled to hear speeches from Count Reventlow and Professor Hauer. Above the speakers a long streamer bore the legend, "Our Sacred German Fatherland" and the proceedings opened with a song on the same theme. After some intrepid Christians had been ejected, Count Reventlow decried the decay of the German Churches, the longing for a truly native religion which was being met by the German Faith Movement. Its creed was propounded by Professor Hauer. The choice before Germany, he said, was between Christian Confessionalism, which declared those of another faith to be unbelievers, and the German faith, which stood

for personal freedom. They apprehended God immediately and independently, without the mediation of sacred persons, sacred writings and sacraments. Their faith was grounded in the German blood and soil. They believed in the presence of God in their history, which, like the land occupied by Germans, was holy to them. Rapturous applause greeted his question "Why should any history be more sacred to us than German history?" The German sacraments sprang out of patriotic reality. They did not need Church services on the festivals of the National Socialist revolution, because these were sacramental solemnities in themselves. They had no need to make themselves ridiculous by reviving the worship of Wotan. The old gods had had their twilight. But they of the German faith should always remember that the spirit of the ancient deities was the same as theirs.

The action of the State at this time was of that see-saw variety which has been so constant a feature of the behaviour of the Nazi regime, desiring, as it would seem, to wound, but afraid decisively to strike. On May 6th a conference began between Dr. Frick and Dr. Marahrens, which lasted off and on for some ten days, during which period a few pastors were released from prison, and new arrests ceased. It came to nothing—apparently owing to the intervention of Hitler himself. Meanwhile Herr Hess made everybody laugh by a speech he made at Stockholm in which he said that the Church conflicts were artificially provoked by atheistic Communists and agnostic Marxists. About this time Baldur von Schirach added fuel to the fire by an attempt to defend himself against the charge that he wanted to destroy Christianity and the Church. "We believe," he said, "in the heroic future of our people. Does that mean being against God? We defend the eternal values of religion against those who want to make a business of religion. We build in the hearts of youth a great altar on which Germany stands. Therewith we acknowledge the Almighty, for he has given us this home." All of which confirmed the fears of the Church that the *Hitler Jugend*

were being indoctrinated with a racial religion to the exclusion of Christianity, especially as the Reich Youth Leader ended up his *Kampfpapole* or "War Cry" by saying "We shall march on, against, if it must be, the confessional associations, and against any power which is against Germany." Herr Frick, on the other hand, in a speech to a Nazi rally in Thüringen on June 1st said, "The Church conflict can no more be settled with the policeman's truncheon than the Jewish question can be settled by smashed windows." But he seemed to be powerless to let out of the concentration camps the pastors who had been languishing there for eight or more weeks.

In May the German Christians had come forward with a revised statement of their position in which they said they were not going to argue any more with the clericals and their dead traditions. Their further task was to make it clear that National Socialism was not merely a rational political outlook but a movement with a Divine Mission. Only when this was fully realised would the German man be completely won to it, when he was convinced that it had an eternal value. This was a task that could be only completed altogether outside the Church, because it involved the proclamation of the simple Gospel preached by Jesus, free of all dogmatic hindrances, the Gospel of responsibility to the Creator and Father of the German people, which sprang from the nobility of the German soul. This was certainly a doctrine easier to preach outside than inside the Christian Church.

The Synod of Augsburg

All these manifestations merely strengthened the unity and conviction of the Confessional Church so far as the faith was concerned. On June 4th the third Confessional Synod was held at Augsburg. The first was at Barmen in May, 1934 and the second at Dahlem in October, 1934. The State did not interfere, and some—though by no means all—of the imprisoned pastors were released, which seemed

to be a gesture of good will. The main work of the Synod was the consolidation of the organisation of the Confessional Church in its theological and administrative aspects. Special attention was paid to the training and ordination of pastors. A strong appeal was made to the State to release imprisoned members of the Confessional Church, and to cease from hindering the preaching of the Gospel by such methods and by the prohibition of free speech, free publication, and free assembly. The peculiar urgency of work in the foreign mission was stressed, a type of work that made but little appeal to Nazis. The German Missions abroad had, in fact, suffered catastrophically.

The Synod of Augsburg was in certain respects not satisfactory. It did not speak with the clearness of Barmen and Dahlem against the aggression of the State. Indeed when it came to the discussion of work amongst young people it appealed to the declaration made by Baldur von Schirach on December 19th, 1933, when he incorporated the Church Youth into the *Hitler Jugend*. It is true that the Synod made this appeal because that declaration had guaranteed full freedom for religious training. But the recognition of this aggressive action, assisted as it had been by the Reichsbishop, was in itself a weakening. The influence of the "intact" Lutheran Churches could be felt here and at other points in the conclusions of the Synod. It was—at this time—an influence that obscured the issue.

There was a certain piquancy in an incident which coincided with the Augsburg Synod. The Court of Appeal in Berlin rejected an application by Reichsbishop Müller to restrain the Confessional Church from calling itself "the Provisional Church Government" on the ground that it was a private association. The Court based its decision on the fact that a number of legally recognised Churches had accepted the provisional Church Government of which Dr. Marahrens was the head.

But events were at hand which would decisively mark the end of the Reichsbishop experiment and also present the Confessional Church with new and anxious problems.

The Juridical Position

The first event was one that profoundly affected the juridical position of the Confessional Church. The case just referred to, in which the Courts protected the Church from the arbitrary power of the Reichsbishop, was but one of a whole series of such cases, which proved that, despite pressure of all kinds, justice was still to be had in the law courts of Germany. But the cumulative effect was to arouse the bitterest anger in Nazi circles, where the view had always prevailed that justice was synonymous with the will of the party. They were unsparing, therefore, in their attacks on the Minister of Justice. The attempt to discipline the Church by means of the Reichsbishop having failed—largely owing to the integrity of the Courts—some other method must be found for crushing the independence of the Confessional Church, which had the audacity to appeal to standards and principles that were not recognised by Nazi ideology, and were, indeed, in direct conflict with the belief that Race and Soil are the supreme categories.

On June 26th a law was published which created a new method for determining legal questions touching the Evangelical Church. In future all legal points that might arise in relation to the Provincial Churches or the German Evangelical Church would be decided not by the Courts but by a special bureau (*Beschlussstelle*) set up at the Ministry of the Interior. This bureau would settle first if the point raised came within its competence; its decision would be final, and would come immediately into force. All legal questions touching points that had occurred since May 1st, 1933, would come within the competence of this bureau. The law would come into force on July 1st, 1935.

The significance of a step which deprived them of the protection of ordinary legal procedure, and placed them, to all intents and purposes, under police control, was quickly grasped by the leaders of the Confessional Church. On July 17th they presented a memorial to the Minister

of the Interior, signed by Bishop Marahrens, protesting against this high-handed action.

The Confessional memorandum—which had the united Church forces behind it—urged that the new law made possible decisions which would completely do away with Church law, and affect the life of the Church at the innermost core of its being. This would not only be an intolerable interference with the independence of the Church, but would be contrary to the position legally given to the Church by the Constitution of July 14th, 1933, which was guaranteed by the Führer. It was, in fact, the introduction of a State Church. They had never disputed the right of the State to oversight of the Church; but they were bound to resist any attempt to override spiritual law by secular points of view. This was likely to happen, if questions affecting the inner life of the Church were to be settled by State officials in no way bound by the Confessions of Faith, instead of by judges sitting in the public courts and administering the civil law of the land.

This possibility became a probability when they noted the rejoicing at the new law in precisely that section of the German Evangelical Church whose actions had been consistently condemned as illegal for the preceding nine months. For this reason they were not prepared to wait and see how the new bureau would carry out its work.

Some improvement would be affected if the proposed bureau was presided over by members of the ordinary judiciary, bound to the law of the land. The bureau must administer the law as it was, and not have the power to make the new laws.

In a further statement of the legal position the Provisional Church Government pointed out that by Article 137 of the Reich Constitution, the Christian Churches in Germany had the right to their own law, and that this right had been emphatically confirmed by the Führer and Chancellor when on March 23rd, 1933, he had said, "The rights of the Churches will not be curtailed, their relation to the State will not be altered". In the Church it

was impossible to separate order from teaching. When the "*Summepiscopat*" of the Princes disappeared in 1918, its place was taken by the Confessional foundation of the Church. Only men bound to the Confessions could lead the Church. The introduction of a new State Church would be contrary to the position legally established by the Chancellor himself when he signed the Church Constitution on July 14th, 1933. All the troubles of the past had been due to failure to recognise that the form and fashion of the Church can only be determined by the Gospel and not by any secular authority.

The position in relation to this law has been dealt with with some fulness, because it is the most significant event in the whole process whereby the State attempted to crush religious freedom, so far as the Protestant Church is concerned. It reveals at once the determination of the Nazis to get control of the Church at all costs, and the strong legal and constitutional basis of the Confessional Church's position. By this decree even the legal protection that had limited the Reichsbishop's dictatorial regime was removed. The Evangelical Church lost its civil rights and was confronted by naked lawlessness.

In July 1935 an event took place which, for the time being, weakened the Confessional forces. The Synod of Augsburg had revealed lines of cleavage. These were accentuated by the law referred to above, which alarmed the Lutheran Bishops. The strictly Lutheran element in the Evangelical Church had a tradition of State support which made it natural for them to seek every opportunity of reconciliation with the State. They had been given some encouragement by Herr Frick, though nothing had come of his conversations with the Lutheran Bishops. But the need for strengthening the Lutheran standpoint led to the calling of a Lutheran Congress in July 1935. At this congress there was created a Lutheran Council (*Lutherisches Rat*), which, while it kept in touch with the Provisional Church Administration, felt itself free to make independent initiatives in regard to the State.

CHAPTER V

KERRL'S DICTATORSHIP

To serve Hitler is to serve Germany; to serve Germany is to serve God.

BALDUR VON SCHIRACH

Enter Dr. Kerrl

THE NEXT STEP was in some ways more serious, because it was calculated to deepen the division in the Confessional Front. On July 19th it was announced that the post of a Reich Minister for Church Affairs had been created, and that Herr Kerrl had been appointed as the first holder of the office. Herr Kerrl was a Nazi of ten years standing, who had been raised from an obscure and subordinate post in the Law Courts at Kiel to be first Reich Commissar for the Prussian Ministry of Justice. When Prussia was co-ordinated with the Reich, this office ceased to exist, and Herr Kerrl became a member of the Reich Cabinet without portfolio. He was thus out of a job, and, for this reason rather than because of any special fitness for the post, he became the arbiter of the destinies of the Christian Churches of Germany. From the Nazi point of view it was a good appointment, as he was a determined opponent of "confessionalism", who wished to bring the Churches into line. From the Church point of view, this blunt, unimaginative, and uncultivated Nazi was less desirable, since his connection with the Evangelical Church, to which he nominally belonged, was of the slenderest. Herr Kerrl's appointment came at a time when the Party was making great strides in its conquest of the German people. General Goering had declared war on "Political Catholicism". Count Helldorf, a radical

Nazi, succeeded Rear-Admiral von Levetzow as Chief of the Berlin Police, thus replacing a man of moderate views. Herr Himmler, the notorious Reich leader of the S.S. (Hitler's Black Guards) and head of the Secret Police, had forbidden all Confessional youth activities, except such as were in the most limited sense religious. They were forbidden to wear uniform, or any substitution for it. Hiking and camping in public, the wearing of badges, the maintenance of bands, and every kind of instruction in sport were also forbidden to religious youth organisations. No flags could be carried except in strictly religious ceremonials.

At the same time the Stahlhelm was dissolved. This was a large organisation of war veterans that had always refused to be incorporated in the Nazi movement. It was conservative and Christian in temper. So that, indirectly, their dissolution constituted another attack on Christian influence.

Herr Kerrl entered his offices, which were in a section of the old Prussian Herrenhaus, and therefore under the shadow of General Goering's magnificent Präsidium, and quickly set about consolidating his position. Though he was officially said to have gone on leave for three weeks, in order to prepare himself for his unaccustomed task, that did not prevent him from setting up a Financial Administration at the headquarters of the Hanoverian Lutheran Church headquarters, consisting of an ecclesiastical official from Kiel and another from Hanover. This attack on an "intact" Church was followed on August 3rd by an even more important step. Herr Kerrl appointed himself President of the new Bureau (*Beschlussstelle*) for settling legal disputes in connection with the Evangelical Church. He appointed as assessors two professors of civil law and two officials who were regarded as experts in Church constitutional questions.

These new moves, quickly following one another, caused profound searchings of heart. The long drawn-out struggle was telling on the nerves of some. They began to feel that compromise of some sort with the embattled might of the State might be inevitable. And it must always be remembered that a genuine and profound veneration

for the majesty of the State (*die Obrigkeit*) lay deep in the hearts of those who belonged to the tradition of Luther. It was only the brutal violence of the Müller and Jäger regime that had startled them out of their accustomed submissiveness. Thus a combination of motives, half-analysed, led to a hope in certain quarters, especially in the "intact" Churches, which had now surmounted their chief difficulties, that the new plans of the State might portend a fresh start in which old controversies might be buried, and rest and quiet be restored once more. After all, the average clergyman in any Church feels it to be his duty to make the best of things and to live at peace with his neighbours; and when this tendency is strengthened by the half-conscious knowledge that things may be made very uncomfortable for him if he takes a strong line, the inducement not to probe too deeply into principles becomes immensely powerful. Not the least impressive aspect of the story of the last five years in the German Evangelical Church is the number of pastors who refused to be diverted from the main issue by any reason, however specious, or any personal dangers, however serious.

The possibility of acquiescence in the new plans of the Government that began to make itself felt caused the deepest concern among the Confessionals, especially those of the Prussian Church, which was the Church most disorganised by the Reichsbishop's regime, and therefore most exposed to attack. The Pastors' Emergency League on July 30th sent round a letter urging all to stand firm and to stand together. The latest measures relating to finance and to legal questions, and the establishment of a Ministry for Religious Relations indicated a solution contrary to the synods of Barmen, Dahlem and Augsburg. A clear, uncompromising "No" must be returned to any attempt to settle the Church question by methods opposed to those Synods. Among the signatories were Asmussen, the two Niemöllers (Martin and his brother) and von Rabenau.

The first reactions indicated no weakening in loyalty to Barmen and Dahlem so far as Prussia was concerned. Herr

Kerrl set August 23rd as the time limit by which all pastors of the Confessional Church in Prussia were called upon to undertake to deal only with the new State Financial Departments in the Church Administration, set up by Herr Kerrl. But none did so, because it was believed that State control of financial administration would ultimately mean control of Church institutions and of appointments to spiritual offices.

The first trial of strength was occasioned by the summoning of a Prussian Confessional Synod for September 16th at Steglitz, a suburb of Berlin. Herr Kerrl made desperate efforts to persuade the Confessionals not to hold the Synod, and as an inducement some of the imprisoned pastors were released. The Synod was held, none the less. When it began, it was addressed in a strange speech by Herr Stahn, a member of Kerrl's Ministry for Church Affairs. He said that though Herr Kerrl did not want the meeting, he had not tried to prevent it. The Minister stood by the finance law of March and the decree of August which made him judge of all Church legal questions. For these things he expected gratitude! (As both measures had been bitterly opposed by the Provisional Church Government, it is hard to see what they had to be grateful for.) It was not Herr Kerrl's object to set up a State Church, and all measures would be temporary. Herr Stahn finished up with a warning that, if the Synod made unfriendly decisions "very unfortunate consequences" would quickly follow, for which the Government would not bear the responsibility. The whole speech shewed how little the Ministry for Church Affairs understood the men with whom they had to deal, men quite unintelligible to the clenched fist mentality of the Nazi.

The Synod defined its position in no uncertain terms. They refused to surrender their faith to force or to accept a Church Government that employed it, and they went on to make some very pointed observations. Since all men of whatever race—including the German—stood under the curse of Original Sin, all alike needed the redemption which only the Crucified and Risen Christ

could bring. The Church was therefore bound by the command of Christ to offer salvation to all men,—including the Jews! It was a shameful fact that in some parishes Jews were refused baptism. Anyone who said that baptism of a Jew was treachery blasphemed against the Sacrament. They rejected the Church Legal Bureau as contrary to Church Order, and they declared the Finance Law of March 11th unnecessary and illegal. The administration of the Confessional Church was the legal organisation of the Church itself. The Synod begged the Reichsminister for Church Affairs to restore legality to the Church.

Kerrl Makes Himself Dictator

What Herr Kerrl did was the very opposite. Within a week he published a decree which went far beyond anything the Nazi regime had yet attempted against the Church. It was called a "law for safeguarding the German Evangelical Church", and it contained one comprehensive paragraph.

"The Reich Minister for Church Affairs is empowered, for the restoration of orderly conditions in the German Evangelical Church and the Regional Evangelical Churches, to issue ordinances with binding legal force. The ordinances will be promulgated in the Reich *Law Gazette*."

By this act an official of the State obtained a control over the Church which even Bishop Müller had never been able to achieve. It was naked and open dictatorship from outside. The decree was dated September 24th, and was signed at Munich by Hitler and Kerrl. It, therefore, obviously embodied the "very unfortunate consequences" with which the Prussian Confessional Synod had been threatened, if it did not toe the line. In a preliminary foreword it was explained that the object of the law was to enable the Church itself to settle its questions of Faith and Confession in complete Freedom and Peace! This peace had been disturbed because, after a single German Evangelical Church had been consummated, its unity was destroyed by a struggle of churchgoers against each other.

Everything, of course, depended on what use the Minister for Church Affairs made of his autocratic power. His first and most important step was not lacking in ingenuity, and it must be recorded that it was accompanied with the profusest expressions of good-will. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of these professions, because if Herr Kerrl had succeeded in bringing unity into the Church, it would have been a great feather in his cap, and would have immensely enhanced his position in the Party. But he was hampered by two limitations, a very inadequate understanding of the spiritual issues involved, and insufficient personality or authority to stand up to men like Himmler and von Schirach, who were bent on crushing the Church.

The Church Committees

Herr Kerrl's idea was to appoint "Church Committees", which should undertake the task of bringing peace and order into the Church. The committees were to be nominated by himself, and therefore they would be State-appointed, and derive whatever authority they possessed from the State. But on the other hand their members would be "Churchmen", who would thus be able to carry out the work, as it was thought, on Church principles. The first to be appointed was the Reichs Church Committee for the whole Church, which came into existence on October 14th, 1935. At its head was Dr. Zoellner, a name calculated to inspire confidence. He was a much respected Lutheran Superintendent, who was well-known outside Germany because of the part that he had played at the Faith and Order Conference at Lausanne in 1927.

During 1935, in addition to the Reichs Church Committee, four Regional Committees were appointed—in Old Prussia on October 14th, in Hesse Nassau on November 9th, and in Saxony on December 4th.

There is no doubt that, in certain quarters, especially among the Lutherans and in the "intact" Churches the appointment of these committees was hailed with a sense

of relief. The presence on them of men known to be true Churchmen, like Zoellner, encouraged the hope that by their means practical steps might be taken—even if by somewhat irregular methods—to bring the Church into peaceful waters again, where it would be free to rebuild its shattered organisation. It was given out that they were merely a temporary device, which had this purpose in view.

But from the first the more far-sighted Churchmen believed that there were defects in their formation that must ultimately prove fatal to the usefulness of the Committees. In the first place, the preamble to the law made certain historical statements about the origin of the law which boded ill. The blame for the confusion in the Church was placed on the people who went to Church, when it was notoriously due to successive aggressive and illegal acts, at first inspired, and subsequently carried out by the State itself. This was an unpromising starting point.

This unfortunate impression was in no way lessened by the Appeal issued by the Reichs Church Committee immediately after it was appointed. It began well by founding itself on the declaration of Faith made in the first article of the Church Constitution of July 1933, which was the basis to which the Confessionals always appealed. But a confusing element was introduced in the very next paragraph, which, on this basis of belief, appealed to the parishes for loyalty and obedience to People, Reich, and Führer. So far so good. It was the next sentences that introduced the complication. "We affirm the National Socialist development of the people on the basis of Race, Blood and Soil. We affirm the will to freedom, national worth, and socialist readiness for sacrifice, even to the offering of life for the community of the people. We recognise therein the reality given us by God for our German people." Only, the Appeal continued, by recognising these facts would it be possible to preach the Gospel of the Crucified and Risen Saviour to the German People and restore the broken unity of the Church.

The Appeal was signed by Zoellner and the seven other members of the Reichs Church Committee.

Criticism of the Committees

Suspicious were at once aroused. These statements about the development of the people on the basis of Race, Blood and Soil might be all right in a political utterance. But what right had such purely secular notions to appear in a Church utterance. They portended—occurring where they did—exactly the error of the German Christians, which was the attempt to incorporate the National Socialist Weltanschauung into the faith of the Church, especially as there was no firm reference to the Confessional basis, which experience had shewn to be the only safeguard against turning a racial theory into a religious dogma.

It was noteworthy that the first criticisms of the new regime to appear came from the "intact" Churches of the South. A particularly devastating criticism of the fatal compromise embodied in the Reichs Church Committee was the work of a group of pastors in Württemberg. They wrote, they said, with the greater freedom because, as members of an "intact" Church they would not be affected in the same way as in those Churches where the legal government had been destroyed. As a matter of fact, in Württemberg and Bavaria the Church Committees consisted of Confessional members only. It was all very well to say—with the Church Constitution—that the unshakable basis of the German Evangelical Church was the Gospel, as that is witnessed to in Holy Scripture, and is brought newly into light by the Confessions of the Reformation. But it was significant that the next sentence which declared that the powers of the Church were limited thereby was omitted. The Appeal omitted to say that Christ is and remains the Head of the Church. How could the committees do otherwise, when they had a double commission as "Churchmen" and as State-appointed. Again how could they stand for the sacred power

of the Church to make its own order? The linking of the Church to the *Weltanschauung* of a particular historical epoch, to political aims and racial boundaries nullified the faith. The Church could not be turned into a Christian National Socialist sect, which included non-Christians who were National Socialists, while Christians who were not National Socialists were excluded. When the authors of the Appeal affirmed their belief in the National Socialist development on the basis of Race, Blood and Soil, they were merely uttering a private opinion, which could not bind the Church. Every "fact of history" is the work of God, but only as a fact of the world which passes away. What would the committees do, when confronted by a preacher of the Gospel who perhaps took a different view of historical events. Would they invoke the power of the State to remove him from his office? Where would their freedom be now they had accepted the State commission?

The committees said their work was merely an "interim". But if the "interim" was not founded on the Confession of Faith, where would it lead to? When in Church History had it been known that a State freely abandoned the control it had obtained over a Church, and the National Socialist State, with its conception of Totality was the least likely in the world to do it, even if it wanted to. It was called a transitional period. But was it likely that God would—after this interim—come to dwell in a Church which He had not been allowed to build. The Württemberg pastors begged Dr. Zoellner to turn his attention to the distress of conscience, which indicated the bankruptcy of Lutheranism,—that Lutheranism, for which he had so eminently striven all his life long. One result of the oppression of conscience had been that those Lutherans who were true to their conscience had found themselves coming to a new positive solution. The very same people who shortly before had refused to make a common confession with the Reformed in a Synod, and had demanded that the Prussian Union should be purely Lutheran (the reference was to Dr. Zoellner himself),

were now being compelled by Dr. Zoellner to surrender not only particular declarations of the Lutheran Church on Church Order, but even to surrender the Confession itself as the constituent element of the visible Church, to return to the idea of the invisible Church, and to hand the ordering of the visible Church to the State police to fashion. (This was rather hard on Zoellner, who had so far not called in the police. But the principle underlying his regime was not incorrectly depicted.) With all the good will in the world, they said, Dr. Zoellner could not save the Faith unless he abandoned the double foundation, secular as well as churchly, on which the committees were founded. The Württemberg pastors were to prove true prophets in the end.

Dr. Zoellner's Difficulties

The Appeal of the Reich Church Committee and the damaging replies it called forth gave its work a bad start. The situation was to grow worse when signs began to appear in November that the Reichs Church Committee was not merely an advisory or mediatorial body, but claimed to take over the whole leadership of the Church.

The formation of the Committees was attended with difficulties of many kinds. What happened in Hesse Nassau was symptomatic of what happened in other parts of North Germany when the Church Government was in the hands of a "German Christian" Bishop imposed by Ludwig Müller. The Bishop, Dr. Dietrich, was a strong "German Christian". He had worked hand in glove with the Nazi Governor, Herr Jakob Sprenger, and, with his assistance, he had not hesitated to arrest pastors and even send them to concentration camps. It was not therefore surprising that, when the question arose of the appointment of a Church Committee for Hesse Nassau, the Confessional Synod of the Regional Church refused to take part in any new ordering the Church of Hesse Nassau, if it involved co-operation with Dr. Dietrich and his colleagues, on the ground that he misused his office by acts of violence against

the clergy, hindered their preaching and aspersed their honour, and also because his teaching was not sound. As a matter of fact, these "German Christian" Bishops were a considerable hindrance to Dr. Kerrl, who in the first stages of his work appeared genuinely to wish to make a compromise that would give the Confessionals something like the weight they deserved. In Hesse Nassau that was considerable. Out of the 800 clergymen of the Regional Church, 400, including 43 retired men, were Confessionals, and in addition there were 90 unordained vicars and theological candidates on the same side. When the committee was appointed it was found to include Dietrich and two other "German Christian" members; while the six others were members of the Confessional Movement. The Confessional members urged that the first duty of the Church Committees should be to restore legality, the withdrawal of laws and decrees, that hindered pastors in their work and forbade the parishes to express their opinion publicly, and finally that the pastors who had been thrust out of office should be restored, and those who were in prison released.

When these things had been done—which fell within the competence of a State-appointed committee—the regional synod could then build up the organisation of the Church afresh in conformity with the Confession of Faith. Bishop Dietrich declared those conditions to be impossible. He refused either to work with the new committee or to resign. So the work of the Church Committee was brought to nought—by the "German Christian" minority! In Saxony the attempts to form a committee were similarly nullified by the "German Christian" Bishop Koch.

Meanwhile the Confessional movement kept all its organisations intact, on the ground that until new constitutional bodies were formed after free elections, they were the only bodies that could preserve the faith and keep the Church on a Christian basis. It might have been thought that after his experience in Hesse Nassau and Saxony, Herr Kerrl would have seen that his troubles were caused by the "German Christians", and would

have directed his activities against them. It is quite possible that if he had been left to himself he might have done so. But on November 27th he had an interview with Herr Hitler, and after that a conference with the Nazi Gauleiter (Regional Party leaders). After these interviews he immediately turned his guns on the Confessional organisations. At a stormy interview with the Provisional Church Government and the Prussian Council of Brethren he threatened that they would be forcibly dissolved. He declared that not a single "German Christian" Bishop or Dean would be removed from office, and that the Confessionals must co-operate with them. This was the more remarkable because even the Reichs Church Committee was demanding their removal as a preliminary to pacification.

Dr. Kerrl followed up his words by swift action. On November 28th the trustee funds of the Confessional Movement were confiscated by the Secret Police. On November 31st the Council of Brethren of the Confessional Synod were informed by the Police that, by Herr Kerrl's orders, a censorship in advance was to be imposed on all writings multigraphed for distribution. This proceeding struck at the main method of communication open to the Confessionals. Printing was forbidden, but a highly organised system of multiplied typescript had been created. Henceforward all communications of any kind would be illegal. Dr. Niemöller courageously read out the police order from the pulpit and also an account of the interview with Herr Kerrl, who had, he said, forbidden the use of the word "heresy". Dr. Niemöller stigmatised these proceedings as an attempt to reduce the Church to a state of slavery and an attempt to poison the Church with racial doctrines.

Measures Against Confessional Organisations

On December 2nd Herr Kerrl carried out the threat he had made, and took a long step forward on the path of ecclesiastical dictatorship. He issued an order denying to "Church associations or groups" the right to exercise

executive or administrative functions wherever "Church Committees" had been set up under his authority. The blow was obviously aimed at the Provisional Church Government set up by the Confessionals. He forbade any Church association to appoint pastors and other spiritual office-holders, to examine and ordain theological candidates, to inspect parishes, to issue instructions or announcements from the pulpit, to levy Church taxes or make collections for administrative purposes, and to summon Synods. All of these things the Provisional Church Government had done, because they claimed that they were the only true and constitutional Church Government that existed in this time of emergency. The order added that any bodies, which attempted, after the publication of this order, to do anything contrary to it in any of the Regional Churches, would be dissolved.

In an explanation to the Press, Herr Kerrl outlined his idea of his functions more fully than he had done before. He regarded the Church Committees, he said, as organs for building up a "new" German Evangelical Church. He said "new" because the German Evangelical Church was split up into three groups, and could not therefore be said to exist at all. There were the German Christians, the Confessional Front, and a Middle Group, which was relatively strong and could not agree with either of the others. The Church itself had asked for help in restoring order. He had strictly avoided all questions of Confession of faith. His reply to the charge that the Committees were State-appointed was somewhat curious. He had, he said, not appointed them, but merely selected men from the various groups and only appointed them when they felt individually and unanimously able to accept the task. The Church that was needed must be "not a State Church, but an inwardly free, absolutely independent Church, which, nevertheless, through its new conception would quite voluntarily march with the State in which it must work and live." This was earnestly desired everywhere, and everywhere he had found the right men for the

Committees. The Confessional Church could not claim the authority to act in an emergency, because the Church Committees—which he himself had formed—had given him the necessary authority—a somewhat topsy-turvy notion, which left unanswered the question whence these committees derived the power to authorise him in this way. If order was to be restored, it could only be effected by one authority, and that authority could only be the Reich, Regional, and Provincial Committees. The new ordinance would come immediately into force. The Council of Brethren would not be dissolved so long as they merely discussed their affairs in intimate circles, and avoided administrative action. There was no intention of proscribing the Confessional Church.

There could have been no clearer statement that the Reich Committees were not merely advisory but were themselves the Government of the Church. But the decree had no effect on the Prussian Confessional Church. On December 4th the Provincial Confessional Synod for Berlin-Brandenburg met at Dahlem with 180 delegates present. The Synod passed a resolution affirming that Herr Kerrl's order was an attack on the life of the Church and an obstacle to the free preaching of the Gospel. It created a Government which could not be obeyed by the Church without disobedience to its Lord. The Synod also drew attention to the fact that the presence of Confessionals on the Church Committees had not been sufficient to hinder this attack. Most important of all, the order shewed that far-reaching decisions about the Church were being taken over the heads of the Committees. Though the Secret Police were present at the opening of the Synod, and were invited to take "the places reserved for them", they did not come in, or in any way interfere with the Synod. At the end, however, they warned Dr. Jakobi that this continued defiance of the orders of the Minister for Church Affairs would lead to charges of high treason, for which the maximum penalty was death.

The Provincial Council of Berlin-Brandenburg made an

appeal to Dr. Zoellner, pointing out that the most distressing feature of this revival of compulsion against the Church was the fact that it seemed to be going forward with the co-operation of one who had been a champion of Church freedom, and begging him to dissociate himself from it. Poor Dr. Zoellner was in a difficult position. There is no doubt that he was horrified, and he did his best to make protests through his Committees. But the Committees themselves were impotent because Kerrl took the direction of affairs into his own hands. In the meanwhile Dr. Zänker, the Bishop of Silesia, was the object of an attack by Herr Kerrl, who forbade him to proceed with the examination and ordination of candidates for the Ministry. Dr. Zänker refused to accept this interference with his episcopal function.

One other result of Dr. Kerrl's order was an attempt on the part of the South German Bishops, who previously had moved away somewhat from the Confessional position, to induce Kerrl to abandon his order, because otherwise all the Confessional members of his committees would resign. The Confessional pastors in North Germany abstained so far as possible from provocative action, but many of them let their congregations know of the declaration of the Berlin-Brandenburg Synod, and continued to make collections for the Confessional funds. On December 20th Herr Kerrl made another attack on the heart of the Confessional Church by appointing Church Committees for four of the Prussian Provinces. He had announced that there would be a move for peace in the Church at Christmas. But his actions in regard to Dr. Jakobi, one of the most respected leaders of the Confessional Church, and head of the Berlin Synod, were hardly a conciliatory character. Dr. Jakobi had become especially an object of hatred in Nazi circles for two reasons. In December there had been meetings in Berlin to commemorate the work of Adolf Stöcker, a pastor who had been distinguished both as a social reformer and also as an anti-Semite. But his anti-Semitism was very different from the "racial"

variety of the Nazis; and he had also been a determined opponent of State pressure on the Church. At one of the commemorative meetings Dr. Jakobi had declared that, if he had been alive to-day, Stöcker would not be working with the State-appointed committees of Herr Kerrl. The other, and more permanent, objection to Jakobi was that it had been discovered that he had one Jewish grandparent. Just before Christmas Herr Kerrl asked the Prussian Church Committee to issue an order dismissing or suspending Dr. Jakobi. One member, at any rate, refused to sign the order. Whereupon Dr. Kerrl threatened other methods. Just before Christmas the Secret Police took the matter into their own hands, and imposed "house arrest" upon Dr. Jakobi, thus preventing him from preaching on Christmas Eve in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church.

The position at the end of 1935 might be described somewhat as follows. For the first two years after Hitler came into power, 1933 and 1934, the real Churchmen might be described as being on the defensive. At the beginning of 1935 the initiative seemed to have passed to the Confessional Church for the first time. But it had been a year of disappointment. When it closed, the Confessional Church was back on the defensive lines. But there was a good deal to encourage them. Their organisation was much strengthened. It is true that the three chief Lutheran Bishops were somewhat less closely associated with the Confessional Church than they had been, because they were more inclined to hope that something useful would come out of the Church Committees. But there had been a great deepening of religion in the Church itself, and the full understanding of the importance of keeping a firm hold on the Church's Confessions of Faith had grown very much. The Confessionals had by no means won everybody to work with them. The Church still lacked unity, and a leadership universally acknowledged. But this brave stand had won a sympathy among many who would not openly side with them and carried a far-reaching

respect among increasing numbers of lay people who might hardly be Christians at all, not only in Germany, but throughout the world.

The Confessionals State Their Case

When 1936 opened it seemed at first as though the move for peace in the Church was really going to take place. On December 2nd, 1935, Kerrl had issued a decree which made the Confessional organisations illegal. But no steps were taken to implement the decree. It looked as though it was a bluff that failed. On the first Sunday of the year, January 12th, the Confessional pastors in Prussia read out from the pulpit a declaration of their objections to the way in which the Church Committees were being used. They were willing to recognise them as organs which would assist in the reorganisation of the Church, but not as themselves having ecclesiastical or spiritual authority over the Church. It is important to understand that the Confessionals had always admitted an oversight by the State, because the State is supreme over all matters of law. But the State can only act according to law, and the right of the Church to determine its own faith and order had been itself, since 1919, a recognised part of the law. If the State interfered in this sphere it was acting illegally. It had so interfered, and this was the obstacle to peace in the Church. The aggression by the State and its consequences could only be put right by the State, and this the Confessionals hoped the Committees would do.

The Reich Church Committee and the Prussian Church Committee entered into negotiations with the leaders of the Confessional Church. One result was that Dr. Marahrens, the Bishop of Hanover, and the Bishops of Bavaria and Württemberg, Dr. Meiser and Dr. Wurm, were given assurances that no Church Committees would be appointed in their areas. These Churches thus remained "intact"—at any rate for the time—and, as the teaching there was thoroughly Confessional in character, the result was a

victory for the Church party, even though the Lutheran Bishops were somewhat more loosely connected with the Confessional Church than had once been the case. The safety which the "intact" Churches had thus won for themselves was somewhat equivocal. The effect was that they morally supported the Church Committees because they had nothing to fear from themselves, and thus made matters more difficult for the "destroyed" Churches, upon which the Church Committees were imposed. A rift was thus created in the Confessional Movement.

The proceedings that had been begun against Dr. Zänker were withdrawn by Dr. Kerrl's orders. It would seem that this was due to the refusal of the Prussian Church Committee to countenance State interference with a Bishop whose only offence was that he insisted on performing the characteristically episcopal function of examining and ordaining candidates for the ministry. This was in January.

The Saxony Regional Committee also shewed that it would not tolerate heresy in Saxony. The Church in that district was under the control of a "German Christian" Bishop Koch. In 1933 it had adopted 28 Theses, which were notorious for the concessions they made to the Nazi ideology. They admitted, for example, the Aryan paragraph. The Regional Committee now deprived Bishop Koch of most of his functions and disowned the 28 Theses, restoring the Augsburg Confession to its unique supremacy.

The Synod of Oeynhausen

The next stage in the troubled history of the Church Committees was reached when a Confessional Synod for the whole Reich met at Bad Oeynhausen on February 17th, 1936, which defined the attitude of the Confessionals to Kerrl's Committees. In so doing it broke up the unity of the Provisional Church Administration. The Synod decided that Herr Kerrl's Committees could not be recognised either as a temporary or as a permanent Government of the Church on two grounds. The first was

that they were appointed by an official of the State, and the other was that, as the Committees consisted of "German Christians" as well as Confessionals, they were incapacitated from distinguishing between true and false doctrine. The Committees could only lead to the further destruction, not to the unifying, of the Church. The Synod also asserted the vital necessity of the work of the Confessional Church as an Emergency Church Government.

The objection to the presence of "German Christians" on the Committees might seem unreasonable to outsiders. Even if they were a minority, they were a minority that should be reconciled, and this would be easier, it might be supposed, if they had some representation. As a matter of fact, the Confessionals did not wish to exclude all and every "German Christian" from the Committees. They frankly recognised that there were individual "German Christians" who were perfectly sound in their allegiance to the Confession, and to the inclusion of such men as individuals they raised no objection. It was, however, quite another matter if men were to be appointed as representatives of the Party, because the Party as such was deeply committed to a National Church which was in effect a State Church, and also to a religious valuation of Race, Blood and Soil which contradicted Christian teaching.

During the first months of 1936 a number of incidents occurred which illustrated the difficulty of working with the "German Christians". One such incident was an effort to make a new translation of the Bible, that would make it palatable to National Socialists. The announcement of this strange project was made to a conference at Bremen in February by the "German Christian" Bishop of Bremen, Heinz Weidemann, who had been appointed by Ludwig Müller in 1934. He said it was not a question of the Luther of yesterday but of the Christ of to-day. No German would look at a book which told him to accept the law of Moses. They were now concentrating on the Gospel of S. John, to which they were attracted as National Socialists because it described the bitter fight of the bearers of the Divine

Message with the Jews. It would thus open the Bible to many who no longer felt interested in it. At the same meeting the favourite Nazi theory was put forward, that Christ was not of Jewish descent because He was of Galilean origin.

Similar anti-Semitism broke out again in February against Pastor Jakobi. The Nazi Press demanded that he should not appear again in a German pulpit. The Prussian Church Committees advised him to refrain lest there should be a disturbance, and the "German Christian" Parish Council of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church warned him that he must either submit to Herr Kerrl or be turned out. The Confessionals rallied to his defence and invited their people to go to hear him preach on the evening of February 16th. The Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church is a very large building with galleries. Long before the service was timed to begin, 4,000 people had crammed themselves into the Church. At the appointed hour Pastor Jacobi appeared, accompanied by a body-guard of fifty Confessional pastors, and preached without let or hindrance.

The Confessionals' lack of confidence in the Committees was justified by the difficulties with which they were confronted. In Schleswig-Holstein the Committees broke down because the "German Christian" members refused to agree to a declaration against "the new paganism". In Hesse the Committee wished to reinstate the pastors who had been suspended by Ludwig Müller, but were prevented by the local Nazi leader.

What the "German Christian" outlook is will be seen from an account of a Confirmation Service held under their auspices, printed in the appendix.

The Confessional Cleavage

These decisions of the majority widened the rift that already existed in the Provisional Church Government. Differences came out into the light. The Lutheran Bishops clung to the hope that the State was really friendly. They listened somewhat too eagerly to Kerrl's profuse professions

of friendliness—and, unwittingly, they played his game. Dr. Marahrens resigned the presidency of the Provisional Church Government and agreed instead to become head of the Committee that Herr Kerrl appointed to administer the affairs of the Evangelical Church of Hanover. Earlier Kerrl had said that he would not appoint a Committee for Hanover. But now apparently he had changed his mind. No doubt Dr. Marahrens thought that if this was to be done it was important that he himself should preside over it. Men in positions of authority are apt to think that all will be well if they retain command, even though the principles underlying the government are changed. His feelings were cleverly spared by Kerrl by the appointment of only one "German Christian" to the Committee. But nothing could alter the fact that the Bishop of Hanover had surrendered an authority deeply based on the Church itself, for one that was precariously bound to a Minister of the State. And behind the constitutional question lurked the menace of false teaching implied in any compromise with a representative of the "German Christians". Nor could the grievous wound to Confessional unity be concealed.

One consequence of Bad Oeynhausen was the appointment of a new provisional executive committee for the Provisional Church Administration, consisting of Pastor Niemöller, Dr. Böhm and Pastor Albertz, who had all been in the forefront of the Confessional movement from the beginning.

Heathenism in the Schools

The Synod of Oeynhausen took up another aspect of the defence against the new heathenism—the question of the schools. A memorandum was drawn up which declared that the Church was responsible for the education of all baptized children. God had given the Church the duty to contend that, not only in the home and in the family, but also in the school, the view of life that was imparted should be ruled by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Things had come to such a pass that the Christian basis of the whole

German school system was being severely attacked and in some important particulars was already put on one side. Two forms of faith were struggling for the mastery in the schools of Germany. One was inspired by the self-glorification of man. It did not only aim at the diminishing of the influence of the Church; it attacked the Christian message as injurious to the People. The other was based on faith in Jesus Christ, who was crucified and had risen again on behalf of mankind. It declared obedience to Him to be the unchangeable basis of all true education. Emphasis was laid on the fact that the "deconfessionalisation" of the schools which was being introduced, led not only to the removal of the school from the Church and Christian teaching but ultimately to the substitution of a false faith. The position had now been reached in which teachers were afraid of their schools being condemned on political grounds if they confessed their Christian faith in the course of their teaching. On the other hand, they were required to impart a German faith which was a mixture of sentimental, romantic and liberal ideas instead of the Christian faith. The only possible result of an education of this kind would be that the young would be reduced to doubt and uncertainty, to the rejection of all authority, and the destruction of all the foundations of a moral and historical education.

The State must be asked to take care that this secret anti-Christian propaganda was brought to an end. Those teachers who were in no sense Christians were to abstain from taking part in instruction in the Christian religion. The abandonment of school worship and school prayers and the substitution for them of instruction in the Weltanschauung must be changed. The State must make it quite clear whether the confession of Christ or confession against Christ was to rule in the German school. Pastors and lay people must take up this question with the greatest earnestness.

The school was the sphere where the conflict between the Christian faith and the Nazi religion was most acute because the Nazis were determined at all costs to obtain

possession of the souls of the young. Later events were to shew how crucial this question was.

The anxieties brought to a head by the Synod of Oeynhausen led to a bold and unusual step on the part of the Confessional leaders.

The Memorandum to Hitler

During the spring of 1936 the Confessional leaders came to a fateful decision. They would test for themselves how far it was the case that the anti-Christian forces that were working against the Church with increasing energy had the approval and support of the Government. They wanted also to find out what justification there was for the belief that the motive behind the appointment of the Committees was really friendly and that an accommodation with the State was possible. They would test Kerrl's professions of conciliation by going over his head to the fountain of power.

Accordingly at Whitsuntide they addressed a memorandum to Hitler himself. It was a private memorandum and the greatest possible secrecy was preserved, because they wished, not to make a demonstration, but to discover the truth. In this memorandum they asked the Führer the direct question, Had the attempt to dechristianise the German people which was going forward the co-operation of responsible statesmen or was it being merely permitted? In spite of the promise that the National Socialist Party stood on the basis of "positive Christianity", it had unfortunately become plain that leading personalities of the State interpreted the expression "positive Christianity" in a very arbitrary manner. The Minister of Propaganda and Education of the People (Dr. Goebbels) had given it a purely human interpretation; Rosenberg, who was responsible for the instruction in schools, described his "Blood Mysticism" as "positive Christianity"; while party officials reviled the Christianity which held to the Creeds and to Revelation as "negative".

The most serious aspect of the matter was that the Church itself was never allowed publicly to answer these defamations of Christianity put forward by eminent people.

The dechristianising of the German people was encouraged by the demands of the party that every one who belonged to the National Socialist organisations must whole-heartedly accept the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, e.g. Dr. Ley, the Minister of Labour had announced that the aim of the Party was to impress the totalitarian conception on the soul of the German people. It could not be endured, he said, that any other party or any other point of view could prevail in Germany. "We believe that only through National Socialism can the German people become eternal. We want, therefore, the last German, whether Protestant or Catholic." This *Weltanschauung* was put forward as a substitute for a decayed Christianity, and Blood, Race, People and Honour are raised to the rank of eternal values. The Evangelical Christian was gravely injured in his loyalty by the fact that there were still concentration camps in Germany, which claimed to be a State founded on law, and that the measures taken by the Secret Police were carried through quite independently of the law-courts.

The memorial spoke very frankly about the Führer himself. A few years ago the Führer had deprecated placing pictures of himself on Evangelical altars. But to-day his judgment was increasingly regarded as the norm, not only of political decisions but of the morality and law of the People, and he himself was clothed with all the attributes of the People's High Priest, and even of a mediator between God and the People.

The Memorial closed with these words. "We pray for freedom for our People, that it may in the future be allowed to go its way under the sign of the Cross of Christ, that our grand-children may not curse their fathers because they have indeed built and left behind them a State on the earth, but one that excludes the Kingdom of God. What we have said to the Führer in this document, we

were bound to say by reason of the responsibility of our office. The Church stands in the hand of the Lord!"

A Radical Challenge

This courageous utterance went to the root of the matter. Such matters as concentration camps and the administration of justice were raised for the first time. It presented to the man who had brought the German people under his heel two direct questions, which admitted of no equivocation. Did he or did he not wish to dechristianise Germany? Did he or did he not wish to put himself in the place of God? It was at the same time a powerful plea for freedom, for law and for justice for the German people, and one that shewed that these marks of civilisation ultimately depended upon the recognition of a Creator ruling, directing and judging human affairs, before whom man must bow.

The Confessionals, who saw more clearly than anybody else what were the real issues, in this protest challenged the embattled powers of the world. Speaking in the name of God, they gave Hitler his chance to clear himself. So far as is known he did not take it. It is impossible to think that he did not receive it. The fact that they did not receive an answer shewed the Confessionals where they stood, beyond a peradventure. They knew henceforward that they were engaged in a struggle for ultimate verities, which admitted of no compromise, and in which they must be prepared to sacrifice everything except their faith.

During the Spring there was an election to the Reichstag. One result was a lessening of the tension. In parishes from which pastors had been expelled it was found that there was an unusually large number of "No" votes, and this fact seemed to suggest to the Government that they must be more wary in their treatment of the Church. Herr Kerrl deserves credit for the fact that he was not able to get a number of expelled pastors back to their parishes, and to obtain the withdrawal of orders forbidding other pastors

to preach. Usually these repressive actions were the work of the Secret Police, who acted under his head, while they often announced that they were acting under his orders, thus illustrating how little reliance could be placed on a Ministry for Religious Affairs as a peace-maker under the Nazi regime. The truce did not last long. It was not many weeks before more pastors were arrested because they protested against a speech which Dr. Ley, the Minister of Labour, made on May Day, in which he urged his hearers not to listen to the fools who spoke of the earth as a vale of tears, of eternal sin and guilt, of contrite hearts.

The Hitler Appeal Published

During July another storm blew up. In some way which has never been fully explained, the secret memorandum sent by the Confessional leaders to Hitler was made public. It is possible that the memorandum had all the time been held up at the Church Ministry, who were waiting for a favourable opportunity to release it, in the hope that it might form a useful excuse for more drastic action against the Confessional Church. On the other hand, it is the case that just before its publication the Secret Police raided the Confessional offices and impounded papers, typewriters and duplicating machines. The incriminating document may have been discovered at this time. A new drive was anyhow in progress against the Confessional Church. Herr Kerrl had ordered the Provisional Church Government to cease calling itself by this title (*Vorläufige Leitung*). The Reich Church Committee, while maintaining that it would not hamper the activities of the Confessional Councils, had at the same time warned these Councils that they must be dissolved. Herr Kerrl forbade the Reich Committee to have any further dealings with the Provisional Church Government. The only answer to this point was a refusal by the Confessional Church to abandon a title which had been upheld by a court of law, when Ludwig Müller had tried to upset it.

More important was the reaction to the publication of the Confessional memorandum, which came as a great surprise to the Provisional Church Government and indeed was something of a shock. But since it had appeared they thought it best to explain to Church people as fully as possible the circumstances which led up to the despatch of the memorandum. A manifesto was drawn which drew attention to the unparalleled attacks that were being made on the Christian Faith in camps and schools and newspapers such as the *Schwarze Korps*, while all kinds of hindrances were put in the way of defending the Church. "In the country of Martin Luther Evangelical Christians are prevented from bearing witness to the Gospel in public meetings." Church activities were spied on; the State interfered with the inner life of the Church; the youth was kept from Church by parades and meetings. This was the second time a plea had been addressed to the Führer (the earlier one was sent on April 10th, 1935, which had been sent as a cry of distress by the then Provisional Church Administration of the Evangelical Church, the Reich Council of Brethren, and the Church Government working with the Provisional Church Government). "Things have come to such a pass," said the manifesto, "that the honour of German citizens is dragged through the mud because they are Christians. The Christian population of Germany note with strong emotion and indignation that they are jeered at and mocked at in every way (press, theatre, lectures, mass meetings) because of their faith in Jesus Christ, and the question is asked whether they are reliable. Those who are firmly resolved to cling to the Gospel are specially suspected in these respects. All attempts to alter these conditions have been in vain, especially because the possibilities of open defence are being taken from us in an increasing degree."

The manifesto was read in thousands of churches by pastors of the Confessional Movement. What happened at the Church of Jesus Christ, in Dahlem, was typical of what happened elsewhere. The large congregation stood

as the pastor, Dr. Niemöller, accompanied by four colleagues, entered the church. Niemöller preached a short sermon from the text Philippians 1, 27-29, in which he compared the position of the Confessional Church with that of S. Paul, who wrote the epistle from prison. The pastors of the Confessional Church were in prison in order to prevent their teaching from penetrating to the outer world; and for the same reason they were not allowed to state their belief in public or to express it in print. He then asked the congregation to wait till after the singing of "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott". Dr. Niemöller, with a colleague on each side of him, read the manifesto from the floor of the church in order to avoid the law against misuse of the pulpit. The emotion of the congregation was intense; women were in tears, and the hymns were sung with great fervour.

The Committees Break Down

Dr. Zoellner's main difficulties did not come from the Confessionals. They came from the "German Christian" side. The fact that the moderate elements in that party worked amicably with Dr. Zoellner, and were thereby brought into more friendly relations with Confessionals, roused the antagonism of the more extreme "German Christians". These had their centre in Thüringen; and it was into their hands that the control of the main body of "German Christians" passed during 1936. It should be said, in passing, that Thüringen is the only part of Germany where the "German Christian" movement has had a real popular backing; because there a remarkable man, Herr Leffler, had stirred up a genuine enthusiasm among peasants and working men for an amalgam of romantic nationalism and socialistic aspiration with an "heroic" version of Christianity—which omitted the Cross and redemption. The following quotation from the *Thüringer Kirchenblatt* will give the reader some idea of the point of view.

"National Socialism is the formulated expression of God's laws, and if the State's legislature consciously serves

God, who then has the right to ask about 'rights and limits' of a legislature based on God's order. . . . The German *Volk* is split and divided by its confessions, the State must see that the gulf does not widen. The best way is to teach young children of different confessions in schools that they are *one as Germans, and as Christians*, and that *Jesus Christ is the common point* from which all start on their different paths, and if they wish they can meet again there.

"The State must base its religious instruction on 'common-German' Christianity. It must have its children taught the eternal strength that flows from the soul of Jesus of Nazareth and His Gospel: trust in God, love of one's neighbour, moral respect of one's self, consciousness of eternity, bravery.

"If the Churches are afraid that the ethical principles of National Socialistic views of life are not compatible with the fundamental values of Christianity, we would tell them, would to God that what the confessions teach were as adaptable to the Words of Jesus as are the fundamentals of National Socialism: National Honour, Social Justice, Preservation of Healthy Blood, and Comradeship."

The victory of the Thuringian Movement became evident in September when the "German Christians" held a large meeting in Berlin. Signs were not lacking that this movement had the support of Herr Kerrl himself.

The Church situation grew worse in other ways during the autumn of 1936. In December a further effort was made to obtain complete control over German youth, when a law was passed incorporating all the young people of the country in the *Hitler Jugend*. Herr Baldur von Schirach, the Reichs Youth Leader was made responsible for their education. He immediately defined his position—in a way that left no room for the work of the Christian Church. "The *Hitler Jugend*," he said, "is no Church, and the Church is no *Hitler Jugend*." He added that the youth of the German Reich, the youth of Adolf Hitler, would fulfil its duty, according to the mind of the man to whom alone their life belongs!

Another sinister feature was the number of leading people who ostentatiously gave up Church membership.

It has always been a custom in the Evangelical Church to read out the names of new members, and also of those who have left the Church. Now, when their names were read out, the pastor who read them was regarded as committing a crime, and many were in fact arrested.

On January 1st, 1937, the pastors of the Confessional Church made an announcement from their pulpits which shewed that the efforts to suppress the Confessional Church were increasing in intensity. They announced that Herr Rust, the Minister of Education, had made a decree to the effect that any theological student who had anything to do with Confessional activities, who attended their lectures or was ordained by Confessional pastors, would be forthwith expelled from any German university and prevented from studying there. They also announced that the Theological School at Elberfeld, a free college of the Reformed Church attached to the Confessional movement, had been closed by Rust's orders. This was part of a plan for cutting off the Confessional movement at the roots.

All these things contributed to making heavy weather for Dr. Zoellner's committees. Nor was his task assisted by the fact that Herr Kerrl's deputy at the Ministry, who was in charge during the Minister's absence on sick leave, was markedly partial to the "German Christian" element.

The crisis of the Committees came at the beginning of 1937. The storm broke out at Lübeck, where there was a "German Christian" Bishop. In December 1936 he had dismissed nine pastors because they sympathised with the Confessional movement. They were placed under house arrest, and so was Dr. Zoellner's own representative. Dr. Zoellner insisted on their reinstatement, and announced his intention of visiting Lübeck to go into the whole question.

Then the Secret Police got to work and searched Dr. Zoellner's house. At the same time an order came from Herr Kerrl himself forbidding Dr. Zoellner to visit Lübeck.

This was the last straw, and was the end of the Church Committees. Dr. Zoellner and the whole of the Reichs Church Committee placed their resignation in the hands

of Herr Kerrl on Friday, February 12th. At the same time Dr. Zoellner's committee sent the Minister a letter which shewed, in detail, how impossible his task had been, and how Herr Kerrl himself was responsible for its failure. Dr. Zoellner had been promised the right to issue declarations of a theological character. That freedom was his no more. His official gazette had often been confiscated by the police. The Church press had even been forbidden to publish his statement of loyalty to the Führer, and his solemn assurance of readiness to co-operate in the struggle against Bolshevism. Now he himself had been hindered in the performance of his duties, when he wanted to preach in an ordinary divine service for the comfort and pacification of a much-tried congregation. Though President of the Governing Body established by Herr Kerrl himself, he was not allowed to exercise the right of free and unhindered preaching of God's word, a right which was based on Article 1 of the Constitution. "We deliberately refrain," the committee added, "from mentioning in this connection what the *methods* have been, whereby the official measures against our President were brought to bear." The Church Ministry then announced that a decree for the settlement of Evangelical Church affairs would be published in the *Gazette* on the following Monday.

Why the Committees Failed

But on February 13th Herr Kerrl broke out in a speech which transformed the whole situation, and revealed quite clearly why Dr. Zoellner's task had been hopeless from the first. In this speech he said that the State wished for a positive, practical Christianity—which he made more explicit by saying that everything that National Socialism did was the will of God. Our "neighbour" is he who is indicated to us by our Blood. "Bishop von Galen and Dr. Zoellner wanted to bring home to me what Christianity really is, namely that it is a question of the acknowledgement of Jesus as the Son of God. That is ridiculous, quite unessential." The Apostles'

Creed is no longer the statement of Christianity. "There has now arisen a new authority concerning what Christ and Christianity really is. This new authority is Adolf Hitler."

"Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh." The guiding principles of the Church Ministry were declared at last. An immediate and trenchant response was elicited from Dr. Otto Dibelius, the former General Superintendent of the Mark of Brandenburg. Herr Kerrl's speech and Dr. Dibelius's reply are of such importance as statements of the conflicting forces that they are given in full in the appendix.

At this point a few words may be said about the significance of the failure of the ill-starred committees. It was the third attempt to bring the Evangelical Church into line behind the National Socialist Government. First the Reichsbishop, then Dr. Jäger, and lastly Herr Kerrl and the Church Committees. The adoption of this last device was a tribute to the strength of Church feeling. The appointment of Dr. Zoellner as head—rather than a "German Christian", or State official—was designed to give the impression that the Church was to be allowed freely to settle its own difficulties. It was given out officially that the aim of Kerrl was that the Church should help itself. Foreign opinion was favourably impressed, and there were not wanting those in England who gave the Confessionals good advice, bidding them to be reasonable and fall into line.

The issue shewed that it was the Confessionals who judged rightly in rejecting this advice. Immediately after the Synod of Oeynhausen in February 1936, Dr. Niemöller wrote a pamphlet under the title "The State Church Has Arrived!" (*Die Staatskirche ist da!*). It went to the root of the matter, and—doubtless for that reason—was suppressed by the police. Niemöller contended that the authority of the Committees was vitiated by the fact that they were appointed by Herr Kerrl. They were therefore State appointed, not Church appointed. The Church thus became a tool of political power, rather than the preacher of the Gospel based on the Confession of Faith. Unless it

were based on the Confession of Faith, there would be no bulwark against the introduction of the heresy of "German Faith" which was continually trying to find an entrance into the Church. That the State and not the Committees was in control was shewn by the fact that all the time the committees were carrying out their work of attempted conciliation, the Secret Police were arresting pastors and dismissing them. What was aimed at was a "political" peace, not based on the true faith. "A totalitarian State that has once assumed the government of a Church can never let it go."

The indignities to which Dr. Zoellner had been subjected proved Dr. Niemöller's contention. Despite the fair words used at the start, the Committees were clearly just another device for State control. The question then was, What next? Dr. Kerrl, in his wrath, had made an announcement which could only be interpreted as a threat of personal dictatorship.

Proposed Elections

And then something happened which gave another indication of the strength of Evangelical Church in Germany. Herr Hitler, a more astute politician than Herr Kerrl, who has always wished to avoid open conflict with the Church, saw that something must be done to avoid the appearance of allowing that gentleman to be a pure Church dictator. He sent for Herr Kerrl, and after the interview he announced that elections for a new Synod would take place on April 11th. On February 15th a decree appeared which announced that the Church would make a new constitution for itself in complete freedom. This was one of Hitler's improvisations, designed to get round an immediate difficulty. How a genuine free election could take place in the Third Reich it was hard to see. Nor was it made easier when Dr. Hinderer, who controls the religious press, issued a declaration on February 19th, forbidding all editors to publish any criticisms of Herr Hitler's decision to hold an election and any discussion of the procedure to be adopted in the election. It was, of course, impossible to hold a public meeting.

All the same the Church leaders—though not optimistic—thought the best should be made of an opportunity which might enable Church people to express their mind. The Confessionals and the Lutheran Bishops agreed on the necessary lines to be adopted and sent a memorandum to Hitler embodying their conditions. Church procedure must be followed. Voters must register with their pastor and vote through their parish Councils, which would elect district synods, who in their turn would elect provincial synods, and so on, up to the General Synod. There must be absolute freedom of assembly and speech, and all repressive measures must be cancelled. The Lutheran Council added a significant addition. "All decisions reached by the General Synod must be subject to the approval of the heads of the regional Churches." This would have made impossible any attempt on the part of the Government to use the Synod as an instrument for imposing its own will on the whole Evangelical Church.

The prospect of the elections thus brought together again the Confessional Church in the Church of the Old Prussian Union and the independent Lutheran regional Churches of Hanover, Saxony, Bavaria and Württemberg as against the "German Christians".

But these latter were by no means silent or inactive. Their organ, *The Gospel in the Third Reich*, published an election slogan, "Down with Liberalism, Clericalism, and Jewry in the Church! Up with the Gospel and the National Socialist Unity of the People!" which was explained to mean "Not only the exclusion of racial Jews or racial bastards from the pulpit and from the Church, but also the exclusion of all creatures who may be regarded as Judaisers in their outlook".

But the elections never were held. The proposed date was postponed from time to time, until gradually the whole idea faded into the background. As has been said, an election worthy of the name is impossible under National Socialism, because National Socialism is the negation of freedom—on principle.

Kerrl Dictator Again

Thus, in effect, Herr Kerrl was left dictator of the Evangelical Church. The arrests of pastors continued. In April 1937, for example, four Protestant pastors, Wolff, Wenberger, Knoll and Brandt, were arrested at Darmstadt, because they were preparing for an "Evangelical Week". In June Pastor Jakobi was arrested again, and so was Pastor Asmussen. This latter arrest was of special significance. Pastor Asmussen is one of the leading theologians of the Confessional Church, and was director of the Theological College set up by the Confessionals in Berlin. This college lived a harried existence, constantly changing its address. But it managed, despite difficulties, to continue its work of preparing Confessional candidates for the ministry. In June the address of the college was discovered by the police. The house was raided by the S.S. (Black Guards); its staff of twelve teachers were taken into custody; and all their papers were seized. It was reported from Berlin that this action was a direct result of the preface written by the Bishop of Gloucester to a Survey of the Affairs of the Continental Churches presented to the Church Assembly. Dr. Headlam's statement that the Confessional Church had no monopoly of spiritual life in the German Church—which was obviously true—was misinterpreted to mean that English Christianity had disinterested itself in the sufferings of the Confessional Church. At the end of June fifteen or twenty Secret Police broke into the vestry of the Friedrich Wilhelm Church in Berlin and arrested eight of the leading members of the Confessional Movement's Council of Brethren. They had assembled in Berlin with representatives of the Lutheran "intact" Churches to discuss the prohibition imposed by the State on reading out the names of members who seceded from the Church. Among them were three members of the *Vorläufige Kirchen Leitung* (the Provisional Church Administration). These arrests were referred to by Dr. Niemöller during service at Dahlem on June 27th. His

subject was Gamaliel, and his theme the fact that though the apostles were set free, their troubles did not end there. It was Dr. Niemöller's last sermon, and will be found in full in the appendix. Pastor Jakobi and Dr. Ehlers were afterwards acquitted, but two others who were tried at the same time, Herr von Arnim-Lutzlow and Pastor Niesel, were sentenced to a fine of 600 marks, or 30 days' imprisonment. The charge against all of them was "incitement to disobedience to State orders." The incitement consisted in reading out names of seceding Church members, despite the decree of the Minister of the Interior forbidding the practice which had been published in the previous February. The defence questioned the legality of the decree. The judgment made it clear that the decree of the Minister had binding force. The arrests of pastors continued steadily during the summer. By the end of October it was actually the case that their number had reached the figure of 500 since February—since, that is, the time when Hitler had announced the Church elections which would take place "in complete liberty and along the lines determined by the congregations themselves." Some of the pastors were only detained for a few hours, others for longer periods. Only one conclusion could be drawn from the purely arbitrary procedure that was adopted. It was hoped to break the spirit of the Confessional pastors, by making them feel that over the head of all of them there hung a sword that might descend at any moment, and that the violence of the blow was equally incalculable. If this were the design, it was certainly not successful. Their spirit was quite unbroken. But it is difficult to exaggerate the nervous strain that such a state of things induces. During the last years many pastors who were comparatively young men or in the prime of life have grown grey and worn, or completely broken in health.

Financial Pressure

In July 1937, yet another form of pressure was put in motion. Threats had long been made to attack the pastor

through his pocket, and to some extent it had already happened. But now Finance decrees were issued which put the pastors completely under State control, by setting up Finance Departments for the German Evangelical Church and for each of the Regional Churches. The extent of their power may be judged from the following regulations. "This Department carries on the property-administration of the Church. It represents the Church. If any decree of any Church authority is held up by obstruction, the Finance Department takes control. The Finance Department can itself make regulations having the force of law. In particular it can regulate the conditions of service of all officials of the General Church Administration, of the pastors, of the local parish officials and employees."

This is a stranglehold indeed. And it has been used without mercy. The Evangelical pastor is in a different position from the Catholic priest. He has a wife and family, and many a Catholic has generously recognised the greater courage that is needed, if his Protestant brother is to resist the encroachment of the State. He may not only suffer defamation, and imprisonment, but his income may be taken from him, and with it the power to support those whom he loves and who are dependent on him. We need not be surprised that this consideration has kept some men silent, when they would otherwise have spoken. The impressive thing is the number who have risked all that life holds dear for the sake of conscience and of truth. And just as splendid, perhaps even more so, is the way in which the pastors' wives and families have supported them and taken the consequences with unabated courage. What the pastors' wives have done is an offering that, one day, the German people, when they have been delivered from the fever that rages in their body politic, will look back to with tears of pride.

Side by side with the financial pressure exercised over those who are under the control of the Church Ministry, have gone the ruthless efforts of that ministry to prevent the Confessional Church from being self-supporting. All collections—much of

which have been devoted to assisting the wives and families of those who were in prison—have been forbidden, and the Secret Police have time and again stepped in to stop them or to seize the money.

The Confessional Stand

Despite all this terrific pressure the Confessionals have continued to be Confessors. On August 29th, 1937, the congregations of Evangelical Churches heard a proclamation which took the place of a sermon. It was signed by Dr. Marahrens, Bishop of Hanover, Pastor Müller, chairman of the Provincial Administration of the Confessional Church, and Dr. Breit, chairman of the Lutheran Council, and thus represented a majority of the Evangelical Church. It was an explanation why the Church must fight on for "full freedom to preach the undiluted Gospel". "Our people," it declared, "must solve the problem of the relationship between political claims and the claims of the living God. Can proper homage be rendered to people, blood and race only by setting them in place of the living God? Need a true son of his Fatherland raise his people to the throne of God? Such is the question with which we are unavoidably confronted." Their answer was that the Church can serve the German people "only if she is truly and wholly the Church, if she proclaims the living God, Who is Lord of all lords, if she really proclaims that Christ is the Saviour and Lord of our people".

This was followed, on Sunday, September 5th, by another declaration of the Confessional pastors—drawn up at Lippstadt, Niemöller's birthplace. It set forth the decrees which they could not obey despite their wish to obey the civil authorities. Disobedience to these decrees was causing more than 100 pastors to be in prison at that very time. (1) The financial control, which should belong to the Church, not the State. (2) The prevention of theological teaching. (3) Forbidding the reading out of names of those who have left the Church. "The congregations have the right to know who belongs to them and

who not." (4) Forbidding public statements about the proposed elections. (5) Forbidding taking offerings other than those ordered by the State Department. (6) Asking for prayers for those who were persecuted.

Re-enter Dr. Werner

In December Kerl celebrated his fiftieth birthday by issuing a decree which made it perfectly clear that he had taken over the government of the German Evangelical Church. The responsible authority under him would be Dr. Werner, the President of the German Evangelical Church Chancellery, one of the Reichsbishop's colleagues. The decree declared that the Councils of Brethren of the Confessional Movement had no legal standing.

When Dr. Werner was appointed he was given legal authority over the whole administration of the Church except those departments already set up to control the finances of the Church. It was definitely said that Dr. Werner would have no authority in questions of doctrine, which every man would be free to decide for himself. But it was made clear at the same time, that the Church was not free to object on doctrinal grounds to an administration appointed by the State.

Thus, in fact, Dr. Kerl's dictatorial powers over the Evangelical Church were to be wielded by Dr. Werner. And he has used them, and they have not been confined to the purely administrative sphere. For example, he has taken action in regard to the oath required of civil servants, and used pressure to extend it to pastors. The oath is in this form. "I swear to be loyal and obedient to the leader of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, to respect the laws and to carry out my official duties, so help me God." This oath seemed to many of the pastors to be quite inadmissible, if impaired by an authority that claimed to speak in the name of the Church. As that State is committed to a *Weltanschauung* that desires to eradicate Christianity, the oath trenched upon theology. In Mecklenburg and Thüringen and Saxony, where "German Christian

Bishops are in control, Dr. Werner found no difficulty in getting the oath imposed on the pastors.

He has now on his own authority issued an instruction that all clergy and Church officials of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union must take this oath.

The Council of Brethren of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union has declared that its members are quite prepared to take this oath, if it is demanded of them as citizens, and kept clear of Church requirements. They have instructed pastors that they must not take the oath unless reference is also made to their ordination vows. They are to declare "I take this oath, bound to my ordination vows"; and only before such persons as are empowered for the purpose by the State, and not before authorities speaking in the name of the Church.

From that time onwards no effort has been spared to render the Confessional Movement impotent. Its colleges have been suppressed; its funds have been seized; its leaders have been imprisoned over and over again. In the early part of 1938 an attempt was made to sterilise its leadership by orders forbidding the members of the Provincial Church Administration to meet.

At the time of writing the Confessional Movement is severely smitten. But it carries on, not knowing what may be in store for it, not expecting earthly success, and yet prepared to suffer all that must come, because its strength is not of this world. The resistance of the Confessionals is one of many great vindications of the indomitable power of conscience that history affords. In their own country there are thousands, even among those who cannot follow their example, who thank God for the constancy of the Confessionals. They have given the Christian religion a dignity in Germany that had long been lost. Far beyond its borders the patient suffering of these single-minded men and women has acted as a beacon and an encouragement. Among many all over the world who thought Christianity a thing of the past they have won a new reverence for the Religion of the Cross.

CHAPTER VI

THE NIEMÖLLER TRIAL

Only that which the National Socialist Party recognizes as right is right. REICHSMINISTER OF JUSTICE FRANK at the Ordensburg *Vogelsang*, December 1936.

PASTOR MARTIN NIEMÖLLER has since the first days of the struggle been the outstanding figure on the Confessional side. He was a gallant officer during the War. He has himself described how joining the Navy fulfilled his boyish dream to work where there were great obstacles to be overcome. The end of the War and especially the Revolution smashed his whole world, though not his ardent love for his country. His father was a pastor, the memory of whose integrity and sincerity he always venerated. But it was his own personal experience of the power of God, when all else fails, that finally led him, by that time the father of a family himself, to become a pastor and undertake the hard training it involved. When Hitler became Chancellor, Niemöller was pastor in Dahlem. Here, by his earnest, forceful preaching, he exercised a profound influence among a highly educated section of the community, which included many men in the Civil Service, the Army and the learned professions. It was these connections, in all probability, that kept him so long out of the clutches of the Gestapo. He had been more than once arrested and severely questioned for his courageous utterances, but had always been released. There was no one whom Hitler was more anxious to silence. At last on July 1st, 1937, the blow fell, and he was put in prison. Months went by without his being brought to trial. Niemöller had always been prepared for this. His temper is illustrated by a letter that he wrote after he had been in

prison six weeks. "I would like to tell you that I am not only unbroken after six weeks of imprisonment, but am full of joy and gratitude for God's gracious guidance. . . . It is one of our Lord's unfathomable truths that His trust upholds our peace of mind in all situations of life. It really seems as though nothing at all had happened, precisely because everything has happened, everything that had to happen everywhere.

"I am now resting in peace after the abundant turmoil of the last few years, and am waiting, patient and full of confidence, if the Lord will again need me for service outside these walls. When and how? It is not for me to worry. . . . I know that I and many others whom God has committed to solitary places are carried by many prayers." This was also, it may be said, the temper of the other 126 pastors of the Confessional Church who were in various prisons in Germany at the same time. It seemed as though the Government were divided in their mind about the line to take. It was feared that if he was brought to trial and the trial were public, the full story of the Government's oppression of the Evangelical Church would be blazoned to the world. All the world would certainly be watching, because his courageous stand had made him a world figure. They may well have thought that it was sufficient to silence him by detention. At length his demand to be tried could be resisted no longer. On February 7th, 1938, Dr. Niemöller was brought before a special court in the Moabit prison. The prosecuting counsel immediately asked that the trial should take place *in camera*. I had gone over myself to find out, if possible, what happened, and I discovered that many well-informed people had no idea when the trial was to take place. Nevertheless, it was known in Church circles, and a considerable crowd had gathered outside the prison in Alt-Moabit in which the court was held.

The crowd was of a varied kind, journalists from foreign countries, and, on the edge, a group of young working-men whose comments were of a ribald order. But the main

body was pastors and pastors' wives, and infinitely pathetic was their appearance. Here were no revolutionaries, no disturbers of the public peace. Just the quiet in the land, whom it might seem it would have been so easy to mobilize in support of a system professing to establish order and national unity.

Their faces shewed perplexity and a deep sadness. At the same time it was impossible to miss the note of a confident faith that trusted in God alone.

When the door opened, the friends of the accused who had green and brown tickets were admitted to the building, and the rest of us followed to the door of Courtroom 664. But only those with tickets got into the court, which must have been very crowded. The ticket-holders were soon out again, and only the three Confessional leaders who had been given permission to watch the case remained behind.

They in their turn were excluded the next morning, on the excuse that they had communicated with the Press and outsiders, which was certainly untrue. All that had got out was derived from the public, who were there long enough to know that Dr. Niemöller looked well and spoke with confidence and grip of the situation. In his statement he told the story of his life, how he had served Germany as a naval officer, how after the war he had been an officer in one of the Freikorps, had then farmed for a while, and then he described his ministry. He reminded the court that he had voted for National Socialism in 1924, and had preached a sermon in favour of the movement in 1933. The next day the trial was interrupted because the prosecuting counsel, quite untruthful, accused the defending counsel of being in touch with foreign political and religious circles. Niemöller's counsel refused to go on with the trial until the imputation was withdrawn. On February 18th the trial was resumed. It was understood that Niemöller's defence would be designed to shew that the whole action of the Government in relation to the Evangelical Church was contrary to the Church Constitution of 1933 and illegal.

The charge on which he was accused was abuse of the pulpit. This charge was based on a law of Bismarck's day which had been passed during the *Kulturkampf* against the Roman Catholic Church and had been revived by the Nazi Government for proceedings against pastors and priests, and also on what was known as the "Malice" (Heimtücke) law, which made it illegal to criticise the Government or any member of it.

On March 2nd, the Court passed sentence. It was seven months' imprisonment for repeated violation of Clause 150a, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Law Code (the pulpit clause). He was fined 500 marks for a violation of Paragraph 4 of the Emergency Decree of February 28th, 1933, for the Protection of Nation and State, and 1,500 marks for another offence against both. It is interesting to notice that the first law had been designed against Roman Catholics and the second against Communists. But as he had already been eight months in prison, Dr. Niemöller was held to have purged the two first offences. The Court acquitted Niemöller of the charge of "underhand attacks on State and Party". There had certainly been nothing underhand about Dr. Niemöller. The sentence was so mild as to be, in effect, an acquittal. It left him without a stain on his honour, and did infinite credit to the German judiciary under the difficult conditions of the Third Reich.

But the Nazis were not going to let their prey go as easily as that. As Niemöller stepped out of the dock a free man, he was immediately seized by the Secret Police and whisked away to a Concentration Camp. It was said by the direct order of Hitler himself.

The shock of this miscarriage of justice reverberated round the civilised world. The real meaning of the Third Reich stood revealed in all its naked hideousness. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Upsala, the Archbishop of Thyateira, M. Marc Boegner, and Professor William Adams Brown sent the following telegram to Hitler.

"As members of the Christian Church, belonging to different nations, we feel it our duty to express our deep

concern at the further detention of Pastor Niemöller by the Secret Police in disregard of the verdict of the Court.

"We believe that many thousands of Christians all over the world, who earnestly desire friendship with Germany, are with us in deploring this grave action against a German fellow-Christian, released by his judges after full trial, and acquitted of the charge of 'underhand attacks' on the German State.

"And we pray God in His mercy to guard our brother and to deliver him from evil."

But it was M. Paul Claudel, the French Catholic poet, who gave the most moving expression to the revulsion caused throughout the Churches, in a letter addressed to a Catholic paper of liberal outlook *Temps Présent*.

"M. le Directeur du 'Temps Présent', Paris.

"MONSIEUR LE DIRECTEUR,

"Jugé et condamné à huis clos pour fait de christianisme, c'est-à-dire pour avoir protesté, comme c'était son devoir absolu, contre l'infâme et imbécile théorie du racisme, qu'un gouvernement païen s'efforce d'imposer à une nation chrétienne, le pasteur Niemöller, après avoir purgé sa peine, vient de se voir de nouveau, par un acte odieux d'arbitraire qui rappelle les pratiques du bolchevisme, incarcéré pour une durée illimitée.

"Je pense que beaucoup de catholiques français seraient heureux que vous leur fournissiez l'occasion d'exprimer leur sympathie et leur admiration à ce courageux confesseur du Christ, en même temps que leur horreur pour la persécution hypocrite et cruelle dont il est victime.

"Veuillez agréer, monsieur le Directeur, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

"PAUL CLAUDEL."

Much has been made by Nazi apologists in Germany—and in England—of the provocative character of Niemöller's utterances, and of his supposed attacks on Government authorities. It is, of course, true that he has fearlessly proclaimed the supremacy of God, and opposed the un-Christian Nazi teaching about blood and race. He has

never ceased to warn his people about the struggle between the forces of good and evil in the world, a struggle which they rightly recognised as taking place in their surrounding circumstances. The truth in these respects was uttered in a statement read out by Dr. Dibelius in Pastor Niemöller's Church on July 4th, 1937, the Sunday after his arrest.

"1. It has been asserted that Pastor Niemöller preached provocative sermons at Evangelical services. Hundreds of thousands of Germans have heard Pastor Niemöller preach in all parts of the Fatherland. Many of his sermons have appeared in print accurately, word for word. Countless Germans can therefore bear witness to the fact that Pastor Niemöller only preached sermons which represented the pure word of God and that he was never guilty of provocative language from the pulpit.

"2. It has been said that Pastor Niemöller openly attacked men in high positions in the Government and the Party. This statement is correct insofar as Pastor Niemöller never hesitated to refute any attacks made against the Christian faith and Evangelical Church, even if this meant mentioning names. In so doing, he always, however, acted within the spiritual duties of his office. His voice was only raised in defence of the Gospel when this was being unceasingly and vigorously attacked."

The statement went on to point out that if—as was asserted—he had made untrue statements, it was due to the difficulties placed in the way of finding out the truth by Government action. He was always prepared to admit a mistake if it had ever been proved. He had always refused to give information to foreign countries.

A specimen of Dr. Niemöller's preaching will be found in the appendix where his last sermon is printed in full. A volume of his sermons was published in English by William Hodge and Son in 1937 under the title *First Commandment*.

The truth is that the best way to meet the Nazi attack on the fundamentals of religion was by an exposition of the meaning of God, of faith and of sin that was quite clear cut and unmistakable. But in the Third Reich that is itself a crime.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A nation which in the great struggle of nations that is coming thinks either that it is possible to dispense with religion and church altogether, or abides by a religion and church that are not the supreme expression of its will and endeavour, will lose that struggle. BERGMANN

Catholicism in Germany

THE RELATION OF the Roman Catholic Church to the victorious Nazi movement was in many ways different from that of the Evangelical Church. Under the Weimar Republic, Catholics were strongly organised in a political party called The Centre Party, which had great influence on the Government because it was well-disciplined and was a moderating element. The Centre Party acted with the Socialists and was thus a force on the democratic side. At the same time it stood for old traditions in morals and in education. Within the Centre Party were combined aristocrats, industrialists, small business people and workmen, so that, more than any other party, it represented all the different sections of German life. The strength of the Centre Party gave a quite special character to German Catholicism; it was a Church in which the lay element played a preponderating part. This was true even before the War. But, at that time, Catholicism was severely limited by legal restrictions. When the Hohenzollerns were swept away, and a democratic regime was inaugurated, these restrictions went also. The Catholics found themselves as free as any other Germans even in the dominating Protestant State of Prussia. One of the first signs of this new state of things was the creation of a Roman Catholic

bishopric of Berlin, which had been impossible under the old Prussian law. Catholicism ceased to bear the taint of anti-Prussian particularism, which had characterised it before 1919, because its strongholds were in Bavaria and on the Rhine. It became a national force acting across the boundaries of the old States. It was strongly organised in great lay federations, such as the Catholic Labour Unions, the Catholic Women's Guilds, and especially the Catholic Youth. The heads of these organisations, which had a membership of something between two and three millions, were sometimes lay people and sometimes just an ordinary priest. Thus the Bishops in Germany, though always treated with great respect, did not in fact lead the German Catholics. There were three Cardinal Archbishops, at Cologne, at Breslau, and at Munich, but no Primate. There was no one prelate who could speak for the German Catholic Church. This was the situation with which Monsignore Pacelli had to deal, when shortly after the War he was sent as Nuncio to Berlin. His appointment was itself something of an event. A Nuncio in Germany was a novelty, introduced—it was said—in order to avoid the necessity of recognising the French Ambassador as *doyen* of the Corps of Ambassadors. Pacelli is a man of great ability, who immediately set about the task of making a Concordat between the Vatican and the German Republic. In this he was not successful, though he secured a concordat with Bavaria and with some others of the German States—and his difficulties were not only from the side of the Government. The fact that he was the direct intermediary between the Government and the Vatican did not increase the power of the episcopate.

German Catholics did not look with favour on the Nazi movement. They were repelled by its doctrines and by the brutal violence of its methods. The dislike was heartily reciprocated. To the Nazi the Catholic Church was abhorrent because it is international, because it stands for a system that judges rulers and peoples by a supernatural moral standard, and at the same time claims to have a

political influence, and, most of all, because it had accepted the Weimar Republic, on whom the National Socialist movement wished to throw the chief blame for the plight in which Germany found herself. The Centre Party had been a strong opponent of the Nazis during the election which brought them into power, and the Bishops instructed their flocks to vote against them.

The enmity of Catholicism had been anticipated, in a way that the Protestant opposition to *Gleichschaltung* had not. Indeed there were certain indications that point to the existence of a hope in the minds of some of the Nazi leaders that the Protestant Church might be willing to be used as a tool for curbing the power of Catholicism, and that this was one of the reasons for attempting a strict unification of the Protestant Church. On the other hand, there were signs of alternative proposals for dealing with the problem, whereby, either a co-ordination of Catholics and Protestants into one National Church might be brought about, or at any rate a German Catholic Church, more national, and less dependent on Rome, might be formed, which would work amicably with the Protestant Church for the freeing of the German people from the limitations that were the consequence of defeat in war.

It would be a mistake not to recognise that among the younger generation of Catholics, in contradistinction to the episcopate and the older political leaders, there existed in the early days of Hitler's Chancellorship very strong sympathy with Nazi ideals. Unless this be remembered, what may seem an inexplicable surrender on the part of the Church will be misjudged.

Germany and the Vatican

It is not less important to recognise that when Hitler came into power there was a good deal more sympathy with him and his movement at the Vatican than there was among the Catholic leaders in Germany. Hitler's trump card was the "Red" danger. Pope Pius XI is obsessed by

the fear of Communism. In 1920 he went through an experience that he has never forgotten. He was Nuncio at Warsaw during the Bolshevik invasion. The city was threatened, and there was terrible suffering. All the other diplomats made a speedy departure. Monsignore Ratti, as he then was, courageously stayed at his post, and did all he could to organise relief and to work for peace. But the horrors of those days left an indelible impression on his mind. Dread of revolution was increased tenfold, and fear of the proletariat was deepened in a mind temperamentally conservative. Bolshevism has ever since been the menace constantly before his eyes. Every day he prays for its defeat. Moreover, he was surrounded by a number of Italian Cardinals of pronounced Fascist sympathies. They regarded the National Socialist Movement as a form of Fascism, which would support the outward fabric of the Church in return for its political support. Pius XI is a tenacious and masterful prelate. Only very slowly and unwillingly did he come to see that National Socialism is as subversive of Christian belief as Russian Communism. When I was in Rome in 1934 I discovered how profound was the sense of isolation felt by some of the German ecclesiastics who had fled from Nazi Germany. "These Italian Cardinals regard us as half-Lutherans at best. This is especially so, if we do not indulge in Fascist denunciations of 'damned pacifists'."

The former Nuncio in Berlin, Cardinal Pacelli, was now Cardinal Secretary of State. He knew Germany well, and understood the situation much better than most of the Cardinals. He was also in touch with Prälat Kaas, the able ecclesiastic-politician, who had been the mainspring of the Centre Party. Shortly after Hitler came into power Kaas went to live in Rome. The Papal sympathy with National Socialism was shewn when early in 1933 the Pope himself re-instated an official of the diocese of Munich-Freising, who had been removed by Cardinal Faulhaber shortly before the election for preaching a strongly pro-Nazi sermon. The blow to the Cardinal's prestige was

serious. Hitler quickly took advantage of a situation so favourable from his point of view, by dispatching von Papen, who is a Catholic, to Rome to negotiate a Concordat. From the outset there were difficulties. Many reports reached Rome of Nazi actions in Germany wholly out of keeping with any Concordat. The German Bishops saw the dangers that were threatening them. It is their custom to meet every year at Fulda,—a sacred spot for Catholics, because there lies the body of the great Apostle of Germany, the Englishman, S. Boniface. In the early summer of 1933 the Bishops met and drew up statements which expressed loyalty to the new Government, but at the same time gave a courageous lead to their followers—and also a warning to those who were drawing up a Concordat in Rome. It was very different in tone from Cardinal Innitzer's sudden "Heil Hitler" in 1938.

The first statement related to the Youth question. While welcoming the idea of uniting the youth of the nation by educating them in genuine German nationality and preparing them for unselfish service of the State, they insisted that the Youth organisations of the Church should have the full freedom promised by the Government and not be interfered with by irresponsible people. They must not be placed in an inferior position to certain privileged Youth organisations in such matters as uniforms and parades. Catholic leaders must be allowed to give their whole strength to building up a living Christianity and a genuine nationality. Catholic Youth must follow the leaders appointed by the episcopate. At the same time they must shew a genuinely brotherly attitude towards all German brothers and sisters. This statement was issued in May.

In June it was followed by another declaration which defined the general principles on which co-operation between Catholics and the National Movement must proceed. They would never forget, said the Bishops, the natural and Christian ties which bound them to other nations and families of nations without distinction of language, race or nationality. National unity, they said,

is not to be realised exclusively by identity of blood, but also by identity of outlook. The assertion of the single principle of race and blood among members of the same state leads to injustices which outrage the Christian conscience. Justice forbids the cruel boycotting of those who hold different political principles. They also rejected the idea of a united National Church of Catholics and Protestants (which had been one of the original Nazi panaceas), as an attack upon the holiest elements of their faith.

These declarations re-established the position of the German episcopate, and they were not without their influence on the final terms of the Concordat. But from that time onwards "Fulda" became a name of ill omen to the Nazis.

On June 11th an incident occurred which indicated what was in store for Catholic lay organisations. One of the two great Catholic Workers' Unions, the Catholic Journeymen's Association, had arranged a meeting at Munich. It was addressed by von Papen, who exhorted them to co-operate in the upholding of social order. The meaning of social order was revealed as the Catholic workmen in their orange shirts came out of the hall. They were set on by the brown-shirted Nazis, who tore the orange shirts off their backs, and beat up the wretched delegates as they made their way to the station. Shortly afterwards all the prominent members of the Bavarian People's Party were arrested. This was a Catholic Party of which a Mon-signore Leicht was the leader in the Reichstag. Many contradictory reasons were given. Official spokesmen declared that it was only political Catholicism that was aimed at. "What do we want the Bavarian People's Party for?" said Herr Esser at Rosenheim. "It is not necessary to safeguard the rights of the Roman Catholic Church; the relations of the Bavarian State to the Church have never been so happy or so correct as in these days. The Vatican has sent an official communication expressing its satisfaction that the rights of the Church are not being

tampered with." This was unfortunately true. It was obvious that the Centre Party could not continue. On July 5th Brüning himself dissolved it.

Hitler's Religion

I remember the day well because early that morning I had an interview with this remarkable man. It was in a little sparsely furnished room in a Catholic Hospital where the ex-Chancellor was living for safety. Though his life was in danger, and his life's work, just when it seemed to be reaching its climax, had broken into fragments, Brüning talked with quiet philosophic detachment. Ever since the War, he said, the German people had been hungry for religion, and unfortunately the Churches had not satisfied their hunger. Though they did not know it, the German people needed the Divine Symbol, that expression in earthly and visible form of the Divine Will which is the Incarnation, and the Church and the Sacraments that are the extension of the Incarnation. Not knowing or understanding that, they had invented a substitute religion of their own, and its Symbol is the Swastika banner that waves over Germany. He was serenely confident that the Church would survive, strengthened and purified by the persecution that it would have to endure. Its separation from politics would give it a new life and a fresh appeal. This, from the man who had worked with immense skill to fortify the Church to which he was devoted by the use of political power, was a remarkable prophecy.

On the previous day I had an interview with Hitler, in the course of which he had said to me "I am a Catholic. I have no place in the Protestant Church". Incidentally he had told me that he had not wished to intervene. On my protesting that he had in fact done so, his reply was "They were all at sixes and sevens. Something had to be done". I now asked Brüning what he thought was Hitler's real religious position. His answer revealed his breadth of mind. "Hitler," said Brüning, "was born at Braunau.

Braunau is in that part of Upper Austria which went Protestant at the Reformation. After that it was forcibly Catholicised by the forces of the Counter-Reformation, the Hapsburgs and the Jesuits. Since then there has been no religion in that part of the world!"

Some light is thrown on Hitler's personal attitude towards religion in *I Knew Hitler* a book by Kurt Ludeke, which can hardly be accepted as completely reliable when the author criticizes Hitler, because he is a disappointed man. But the case is different when he is giving opinions of Hitler with which he himself agrees. He describes¹ how Hitler's policy was to avoid any appearance of a campaign against the Church,—and he shews why. He reports Hitler as saying "'National Socialism is a form of conversion, a new faith, but we don't need to raise that issue—it will come of itself. Just as I insist on the mathematical certainty of our coming to power, because might always attracts might, and the traditional wings, whether they be Right or Left, constructive or destructive, will always attract all the activist elements, leaving only a juiceless pulp in the middle—just so do I insist on the certainty that sooner or later, once we hold the power, Christianity will be overcome and the '*Deutsche Kirche*' established. Yes, the German Church, without a Pope and without the Bible—and Luther, if he could be with us, would give us his blessing:

"Hitler was ablaze now, and I could see the ideas of Rosenberg's *Mythus* working in him. When he shouted with passionate energy: 'Of course, I myself am a heathen to the core', it seemed to me that the form this Church might take was implicit in the words."

Ludeke also draws attention to the fact that when Hindenburg and all the other dignitaries of Church and State attended Church service, Catholic or Protestant, to inaugurate his Chancellorship, Hitler himself went with Goebbels to lay a wreath on the grave of Horst Wessel; in doing so he was making a deliberate challenge.

¹ *I Knew Hitler*, page 465.

The Concordat

The two Plenipotentiaries, Cardinal Pacelli and Franz von Papen, signed the Concordat on July 20th, 1933. Some of its details have never been settled, and as time went on complaints multiplied that the German Government had not adhered to the agreement, either in the spirit or in the letter. The main idea of the Concordat was to leave the Church free in its purely religious functions, while carefully limiting its power to interfere in political matters in the decisive way that it had done through the Centre Party. The dissolution of the Centre Party was an inevitable accompaniment of the Concordat. As has been said, it actually took place in July 1933, about a fortnight before the signature of the agreement. In the Concordat the freedom of the Bishops to publish enactments for the spiritual leadership of the people is protected, and the Church retains the right to appoint to all offices, except diocesan bishoprics, without State co-operation. But those appointed must be German Citizens and they must have studied in a German educational institution. Conventual orders are free from State restrictions, but their heads must be German citizens. Catholic education of Catholic children is safe-guarded, though it is said to be a special duty to inculcate patriotic, civic and social consciousness. Two regulations have proved to be of special importance. In Article XXXI Catholic organisations serving a purely religious, cultural or charitable purpose are protected. The determination which organisations come under this head is to be a matter of agreement between the national government and the German episcopate. In fact it has been a perpetual source of disagreement. In this article it is provided that in so far as the Reich and the States sponsor athletic or other young people's organisations, care will be taken that their members are enabled to fulfil their religious obligations on Sundays and Holy days, and that they are not encouraged to any acts not in accord with their

religious and moral opinions and duties. In Article XXXII, the Holy See, recognising the special situation existing in Germany, engages to prescribe regulations which will prohibit clergymen and members of religious orders from membership in political parties and from working on their behalf. But, as it is explained in a supplementary regulation that this does not entail any limitation of preaching and interpretation of the dogmatic and moral teaching of the Churches, this article opens up many possibilities of controversy where two different philosophies are struggling for the mastery.

The Vatican was not ill-pleased at the time with the terms it had made. German Catholicism had always had a strong national flavour. It suited both Hitler and the Pope that there should be a severe demarcation between things political and things religious. So the Centre Party was killed. After all, the concordat retained in the hands of Rome the appointment of all Archbishops, Bishops and Co-adjutors—though, of course, nobody would be appointed who was not acceptable to the Government; this was a concession that had formed part of many concordats. Most important of all, the Nuncio would be always the *doyen* of the Corps of Ambassadors, and the means of communication with Rome. When Herr Frick, the Minister of the Interior, wanted to discuss questions of Catholic administration, it would not be with the Cardinal Archbishop of Breslau or of Cologne that he would talk. He would have an interview with Monsignore Orsenigo. Moreover, the Catholic schools seemed to be placed on firmer foundations than ever. With these gains the Pope might well breathe a sigh of relief. At one and the same time Cisalpinism, the spirit of a National Catholicism, had been kept at bay, and a fresh barrier against Bolshevism had been erected!

Hitler was satisfied because the clergy had been strictly ordered to abstain from every political activity. The Bishops at Fulda would have to speak piano. Yes. A clever piece of work, it seemed. It was more than Bismarck ever

got, or the Pope either! But to the Catholics of Germany the position looked rather different.

Doubts and Difficulties

In fact the Concordat resulted in an uneasy relationship. Many German Catholics felt that too much had been sacrificed. The Concordat, which, broadly speaking, guaranteed freedom for purely religious activities, gave the Church nothing which she did not previously possess. On the other hand her freedom of teaching was severely circumscribed by the prohibition of any political activity on the part of the priesthood, especially as the State—that is to say “the Party”—was the sole judge of what is political activity. Not less questionable was the apparent security given to Catholic associations.

The mere existence of the Concordat placed a difficulty in the way of the Catholic Bishops. The fact that an agreement had been made with the State prevented them from coming out in open challenge to the dominance of the State in spiritual things. The initiative thus passed to the Protestants.

But, as 1933 wore on, the protests of Catholics began to be heard. At the beginning of November, Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau, issued a statement which was interpreted to mean that Catholics should vote for the Government in the referendum that was being held, but should not feel bound to vote for the Nazi election lists. He also hinted that Catholics were dissatisfied with the treatment that they were receiving. Within a week came a *riposte* from General Goering. In a speech at the Sport Palace, received with tumultuous cheers, he declared that they must see to it that Germany was not again undermined by “the red rats” (the Communists) nor by “the black moles” (the Catholics). No reservations must be made even by high Catholic authorities.

The difference between the conflict of the Protestant Church with the State and that of the Catholic is broadly,

that, while in the former it is primarily an internal struggle for the soul of the Church, in the latter it is a battle to resist external forces. But in both cases the same theological objections were taken to the doctrine of Blood and Race. The Protestant Church was concerned to prevent the "Aryan" heresy being imposed on the Church. The Catholics attacked it more as a danger to the whole of Christian Theology. Neither Church could fail to be conscious of the challenge that existed in the attempts to create a new religion of Germanism itself, which were given almost a State sanction when Herr Rosenberg was appointed leader of the spiritual education of the Party. When Rosenberg said that the fight for dogmas was over, and the fight for values had begun, he was quickly reminded, by Protestant and Catholic alike, that the Christian dogmas are an effectual challenge to his notion that racial conflict is the dominant fact in world history.

As we have seen, Protestant professors in Berlin, Breslau, Greifswald, and Marburg had declared that the faith must be supreme. The deep undercurrents of revolt in Catholic circles came to the surface in December, 1933, when Cardinal Faulhaber preached a course of sermons on the Old Testament at S. Michael's Church in Munich. The church was packed, and the crowds were so large that the addresses were relayed to two neighbouring churches, the Studienkirche and the Bürgersaal. The Cardinal admitted that much in the Old Testament is of ephemeral value. But the Old Testament as a whole is a permanent element in the Christian Faith, because it sets forth a unique conception of the Majesty of God and of the idea of redemption. Though there are ethical defects, there is also much high moral teaching firmly rooted in the character of God Himself, especially in all that concerns care for the poor and the rights of labour. Without the Old Testament it is impossible to understand the New, because Christ is the personal fulfilment of the Old Covenant.

The Cardinal's final sermon preached on New Year's Eve was devoted to proving that the conversion of the

Germans to Christianity was not a perversion, as the Nazis maintained, and to maintaining that apostasy from Christianity would be the beginning of the end of the German nation. On this subject Cardinal Faulhaber employed a plainness of speech which shewed him to be a man of courage. "In thinking about the ancient Germans we want facts, not fairy tales," he said; and he based his arguments on the evidence of Tacitus. It was a fact that the ancient Germans offered human sacrifices, that they were savagely warlike in their struggle with the Romans, that they indulged in savage superstitions, that they were given to furious vendettas, that they were indolent and had a mania for drinking. Those who complained that the conversion of the Germans to Christianity was forcibly brought about by Charlemagne forgot the work of saintly missionaries during the 500 years that preceded him. It was through Christianity that the Germans became a nation and a civilised nation. Through Christianity they learnt that the moral victory of loving one's enemy calls for greater heroism than the vendetta. The Christian is not forbidden to stand up for his race and for its rights. "There is no need to reject Christianity and to set up a Nordic or Germanic religion in order to profess our nationality. But we must never forget: we are redeemed by the Precious Blood of our crucified Lord." It was a good thing for the youth to learn about the origins of their nation and its folk-lore. "The best form of ancestor worship is to renounce all that is evil in one's forefathers, the indolence and the drunkenness of the ancient Germans, and, on the other hand, to accept as a sacred inheritance all that is good in them,—in our case their loyalty, their pure conception of marriage and their reverence for women. . . . The grace of God did not save us from the paganism of Russia in order to let us fall into a Germanic paganism." Not the least significant feature of these sermons was the Cardinal's frank recognition that Catholics and Protestants were fighting the same battle. "To our separated brethren we stretch forth our hand to make common cause with them

in defence of the sacred books of the Old Testament, so that we may save them for the German nation and preserve this precious treasury of doctrine for the Christian schools."

Early in 1934 Rosenberg made answer to Cardinal Faulhaber in an address at the Kroll Opera House on "The struggle for a new ideology of the 20th Century". "When a Nazi puts on his Brown Shirt," he said, "he ceases to be either Catholic or Protestant, and is exclusively a fighting limb of the whole German nation. . . . The struggle over dogmas has gone by for us; the great struggle over values has only just begun." He objected to the Cardinal's interpretation of history as an incursion into matters on which the National Socialist is most sensitive. "To speak of the new leaders of Germany as 'warlike ancient Germans', to reproach the ancient Germans with having defeated the Romans in the Teutoburger Wald, to say that God's hand had not saved Germany from Russian heathenism to abandon her to German heathenism, was to present events in a false light." Priests and pastors should be glad that they had been preserved from Communism.

The Struggle for Youth

The education question is always of vital importance for the Catholic Church. When Hitler came into power it quickly became a burning topic, because of the claim of the Party to obtain possession of all Germans "body and soul".

Under the constitution of the Weimar Republic special guarantees for Confessional schools were in force. These privileges were specifically preserved by Article 24 of the Concordat. The value of these guarantees was exposed when the Minister of Education, Herr Rust, announced on June 24th, 1933, that there was only one aim of education in the realm of "World View", namely the bringing up of the young to become conscious members of the German Folk Community. In this sphere of education in "World View" the State could allow no exceptions.

The campaign against the Confessional schools was undertaken in earnest in 1935. Bavaria, the most Catholic part of Germany, except the Rhineland, was the area selected for attack. One of the points most emphasised in the struggle of the Nazis for power was that they were the defenders of the family and the rights of parents against the Bolshevik idea of communal upbringing. But like so many others of their supposed principles it worked out in a strange way. A plebiscite was taken in Bavaria in which parents were invited to vote either for the Confessional school or for the Community school, the *Simultanschule*, in which Catholics and Protestants would be brought up side by side in the Nazi "World View". The result was that 65% voted for Community schools. When the methods employed to make people vote right are taken into account, the surprising thing is that the minority was so large. For a whole year before there had been a campaign of which the slogan was "One People, one Reich, one Führer, one School!" It was freely said that anybody who voted for the Confessional school was voting against the Government, and—worse still—against the sacred person of the Führer. Thus were the rights of parents safe-guarded.

The attack on the schools of Bavaria was followed up by an attack on the sixteen Catholic teachers' training colleges for women, which were in the hands of the religious orders, and twelve of them were suppressed. Cardinal Faulhaber protested. But his protests were of no avail. The Cardinal had grounds for alarm in the kind of teaching about "World View" that was being given in the State colleges for teachers, of which the following is a specimen. "The object is that every man and woman teacher in Germany should be a vehicle and representative of the Movement, one who proclaims the idea of Adolf Hitler. That is our common programme of work. That is the object and task that we put in the forefront of our work."

Further light on the "idea of Adolf Hitler" is thrown by the syllabus provided for the schools of Leipzig in 1934.

The teacher of religion is to remember that the German child has more to do with the religious views of his forefathers than with those of the Old Testament. Every opportunity should be taken to make him familiar with Germanic religion and with the intrusion of Christianity into Germanic religion. He must not forget to shew how the Church has suppressed a large part of the Germanic spirit of freedom. Jesus is not to be presented to German Youth as the quiet, patient one, but as the fighter against a hostile world, as the purifier of the Temple, as the powerful foe of cant. It should be emphasised that He was a Galilean, and He should be claimed as an enemy of Jewry on account of His Aryan origin.

A Kiel High School paper in 1935 enunciated the following points as part of the German Confession of Faith.

"We believe that God has revealed Himself to us in our German blood and German consciousness, in our German home and German history. That is our German Faith. We regard the word 'heathen' as an honourable term, not as a reproach. We are proud of our German Faith, our Northern Heathenism.

"We cannot take our religious faith from the Jews any more. We recognise no international religion of humanity, because People and Races are different. Therefore we German Heathen want no more Jewish foreign religion in Germany. We do not believe in the Holy Ghost any more. We believe in the Holy Blood.

"The foundation of the Jewish-Christian teaching is the dogma of Original Sin. The foundation of our heathen feeling for life is a belief in the value of healthy Blood.

"Whoever has thoroughly grasped the thought of Race must reject the Jewish foreign religion in every form, Catholic or Evangelical, German Church or German Christian.

"We believe in God, the inscrutable, mysterious power of Fate, which we experience in Blood and Consciousness, Home and Universe."

It was not only in the schools that the Youth came under influences designed to wean them away from their Churches. The eight months in the Labour Camp exposed them to teaching which inculcated the notions that to be a German was more important than to be a Catholic or a Protestant or anything else. There are no chaplains in labour camps to withstand the contempt poured on the Bible, the Sacraments, Prayer and churchgoing. Cardinal Bertram of Breslau did not hesitate to say publicly that parents distrusted the labour camps because the young people came under religious and even moral influences quite foreign to those of their homes.

But almost the greatest struggle of all turned on the relations between the Catholic Youth organisations and the *Hitler Jugend*. As we have seen, Reichsbishop Müller had incorporated the Evangelical Youth organisation in the *Hitler Jugend* at the beginning of 1934. The Catholic leaders took warning by this and stoutly resisted a similar process where Catholic Youth was concerned, relying on Article 31 of the Concordat. But Baldur von Schirach cared nothing for the Concordat. "We declare publicly," he said, "that Confessional groups possess no privileges, and we shall not call a halt in front of the Catholic associations." As we have seen in connection with the Evangelical Church, Church youth organisations were forbidden to wear uniforms or to engage in sport. The Catholic Bishops urged their young people to develop with increased earnestness the religious fellowship which still remained theirs. And their voices were heeded. Despite the severe limitations placed by the Government on the young people's organisations, and the falling away of some, the majority of Catholic youth stuck tenaciously to their faith and their societies, and became more zealous in practising their religious duties. No one who has attended Catholic services during these last years in Germany could fail to be struck by the crowded congregations and by the large number of men, especially young men, attending them.

An incident which occurred in the early part of 1935 gives some indication of the trials to which Catholic Youth were liable. About 2,000 Catholic young people went on a pilgrimage to Rome. When they arrived in Rome in their blue shirts, with their rucksacks and musical instruments, they made a very favourable impression. The Pope warmly welcomed them and urged them to be courageous in upholding their faith. On their return journey, when they arrived at the frontier at Constance, they were set upon by the Secret Police. Their shirts were torn off, and all their belongings taken away, rucksacks, instruments, flasks and photographs. This naturally made the worst impression on the young people—many of whom were up till then good National Socialists. The news got about and caused strong feeling. It was heard in Rome itself. So much so that, when the Pope received some pilgrims from Freiburg and Mainz shortly afterwards, he openly and pointedly said to them that he hoped that they would be better treated than their fine young fellow-countrymen had been when they returned. Already in 1934 Cardinal Schulte of Cologne had ordered a statement to be read in all the pulpits of his diocese on February 4th, protesting against the abuse to which Catholic young people were exposed when they went to church. A Bavarian priest writing from Rome to the *Basler Volksblatt* in the following year described the great pressure put on young people to desert their religious associations and belong only to the *Hitler Jugend*. Anybody who did not belong to the *Hitler Jugend* or S.A. could get no work. He was regarded as a traitor or a second class citizen. He described how in Regensburg the rooms belonging to the Catholic associations were attacked and plundered without any hindrance from the police. In one place—Weiden in the Oberpfalz—a group of Catholic girls out for an excursion had been set upon by the *Hitler Jugend*, thrown onto the ground, and beaten black and blue. "We are back," he said, "in the dark days of 1918, when everything was in confusion."

The spirit inculcated in the *Hitler Jugend*—to whom Mr. Chamberlain has so naively sent a greeting—is indicated by the following exhortation hung up by the *Hitler Jugend* at the entrance to the University clinic at Halle.

“The Faith fanatics, who still to-day slide down on to their knees with faces uplifted to Heaven, waste their time in churchgoing and prayers, and have not yet understood that they are living on the earth and that therefore their task is of a thoroughly earthly kind. All we Hitler young people can only look with the greatest contempt on those young people who still run to their silly Evangelical or Catholic Churches in order to give vent to their quite superfluous religious feelings. Who understands Christianity best? Those who are always praying for the salvation of their more or less dirty souls, or we who have set about our task in a hard fashion.”

The *Hitler Jugend* have no chaplains. The religious ideas that prevail are closely indicated in the slogan of the leader, Baldur von Schirach, “Who serves Hitler serves Germany; who serves Germany serves God.”

The Sterilisation Law

One of the earliest consequences of the official adoption of the “Aryan” race fantasy, which Rosenberg had taken over from Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Gobineau, was the “law for the protection of the rising generation from inherited disease”. In view of what was implied in this euphemistic phrase it is not without significance that though this law was dated “July 14th, 1933”, it was not published till the twentieth of July, that is, six days after the Concordat was signed. The fact suggests that the Nazi authorities knew that the law would arouse bitter opposition in Catholic circles. The Roman Catholic Church, like other Churches, had always held that it was the duty of the State to protect the health of the people. But that by no means involved the admission that the State had the right to interfere in family life.

Roman Catholic teaching on the subject of sterilisation is made quite clear in Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti Connubii*, which was issued on December 31st, 1930. In that Encyclical it is laid down that secular authorities have no direct power over the bodily organs of their subjects. When no crime has been committed, and when, therefore, no question of punishment arises, the secular authorities have no right to damage the body on eugenic or any other grounds. Nor has the individual any right to use his bodily members for any object contrary to their natural usage. He may not therefore destroy, or mutilate or in any other way make his natural functions useless, unless it be a question of preserving the health of the body as a whole. Birth-control is here implicitly condemned, and also abortion. On these points the Nazi authorities agree with the Pope. But in regard to sterilisation the disagreement was open and acute.

Under the above-mentioned law "Health Courts" were set up, with powers to sterilise forcibly men and women afflicted with certain hereditary diseases. The net was thrown wide, and included, strangely enough, S. Vitus's Dance, alcoholism and blindness. It is impossible to find out how many persons have been affected. But it would not be a wild guess to say that they amount to several hundred thousand.

There is something to be said for voluntary sterilisation in certain cases. But a law of this kind placed a most dangerous power in the hands of authorities who have no scruple about using any means to further their political aims, and the Roman Catholic Church did quite right in protesting. One of the most frequent excuses for sterilisation is an accusation of feeble-mindedness. There is evidence that men and women who were imprisoned for holding "wrong" opinions have been sterilised because, as it is said, persistence in such opinions is plain proof that they are feeble-minded.

The maximum of insult to Catholic feeling in this connexion was attained when in 1935 the Minister of the

Interior issued orders laying down the procedure to be used when members of religious orders were sterilised, though they were vowed to chastity. It was never to take place without the Bishop and the head of the order being informed!

"Abuse of the Pulpit"

From 1934 onwards Catholic Priests—like Protestant Pastors—found themselves in danger of arrest because they had come within the range of the Bismarckian Law against Abuse of the Pulpit¹ or the law which forbade attacks on Nazi leaders already referred to.² A few typical cases will shew what the position is.

At Cologne in May, 1935, a Catholic chaplain was sentenced by Special Court of Cologne to four months' imprisonment on a charge of abusing the pulpit. The Special Courts, it will be remembered, are courts outside the ordinary administration of justice (*Sondergerichten*) specially set up to deal with anybody who was supposed to endanger the Nazi dominance. The *Gestapo* had denounced this chaplain as having said things in a sermon "which caused the impression that he wanted to slander the Government and its leaders." The chaplain's defence that he had simply spoken against anti-Christian influences was of no avail.

In August of the same year the Supreme Criminal Court of Frankfurt-on-Main sentenced a Catholic parish priest from the Taunus district because he criticised the currency trials, and referred to the imprisonment of members of religious orders. Even defence of fellow believers is a crime in Nazi Germany. In another case the Special Court at Darmstadt sentenced the Catholic Chaplain of Offenbach-on-Main to four months' imprisonment under the Pulpit Paragraph and Malice Laws—because he had made "untruthful statements to the effect that there was a

¹ No. 130 of the Staats Gesetz Buch.

² Gesetz gegen heimtückische Angriff auf Staat und Partei. December 20th, 1934.

persecution of the Churches in Germany". Again his explanation that it was his duty to warn the Catholic Youth Association of which he was Chaplain and President against Anti-Christian tendencies was brushed aside. Any attempt to defend in the pulpit the monks and nuns who were accused of currency smuggling was enough to land the preacher in prison, as was shewn, e.g. when the Special Court of Baden at Mannheim condemned the Catholic parish priest of Balg to six months' imprisonment for this offence.

Two specially revealing examples may be taken, both of which occurred in December, 1935. The first was at Darmstadt, on December 2nd. A young chaplain, twenty-five years old, from Fürth in the Odenwald was charged with misuse of the pulpit. According to the account in the official Nazi Press, it was asserted that, preaching at High Mass on September 15th, he had branded the opponents of Christianity as the children of Satan. But his two chief crimes were, first, that he had said that, as a priest, God and Christendom claimed his first loyalty, and the Fatherland came second to that, and secondly that a baptized Chinaman stood nearer to him than his own brother, if that brother were unbaptized. These utterances were condemned as likely to disturb the peace of the community and to upset the faith of the people in the National Socialist State. The latter charge was doubtless true; the universal brotherhood of the baptized is in complete conflict with the Nazi *Weltanschauung* on which the Nazi State is founded. The chaplain was condemned to six months' imprisonment.

On the 19th of December 1935, as may be learnt again from the official Press, a Catholic priest was condemned at Stuttgart to three months' imprisonment because in a sermon he had preached about Rosenberg's Myth of the 20th Century, and radically rejected its root conceptions.

The hollowness of the charges of disturbing the peace of mind of the population is revealed by the protection that has been, and is, given to those who propagate the

various brands of Neo-Paganism, of which Rosenberg's book is itself a cardinal example. Not only has no attempt been made to restrain the activities of such groups as the German Faith Movement, and the League for a United German Religion, but these organisations have indulged in the most wide-spread campaigns of propaganda for which it is difficult not to believe that the financial backing came from Party resources. If anything is to be regarded as provocative it would certainly be the distribution of anti-Christian pamphlets outside Catholic Churches as the worshippers came out of Mass, a practice that has obtained in Munich and in other parts of Bavaria—which could not possibly have happened without the connivance of the police.

During 1936 the pressure against Catholic educational establishments of all kinds increased. Though the Catholic Students' Unions had been dissolved, the Catholic Students' Club-Houses have continued. But they have always aroused the anger of the Nazis, who have made raids on them from time to time. What have been called "punishment expeditions" have been organised in certain places by the National Socialist "Students'" Union, whose leader is a former Catholic student, Deuchsweller. In Cologne there are three such Catholic Corporation houses. Two of them, "Rheinland" and "Grotenburg", were completely sacked, and the other, "Rappoltstein", which had been transferred from Strasbourg to Cologne after the War, was badly damaged.

Despite these attacks and an ever-present sense of danger, the Catholic Student Houses have carried on. They have been quite unpolitical; but they have been centres of a wonderful religious work.

CHAPTER VIII

ATTACKS ON THE CHURCH

Moral values depend only upon our intention of safeguarding the eternal existence of our people.—*National-sozialistische Monatshefte*, March, 1937

"Political" Catholicism : The Catholic Organisations

AS HAS BEEN said, Article 31 of the Concordat expressly protects Catholic associations and organisations, not only those which exist for specifically religious, cultural or charitable purposes, but also those which have social or professional objectives, in so far as they guarantee that their activity lies outside any political party. It was left for the national Government and the German episcopate to agree which of these organisations fall under this article.

It was not long before the matter was put to the test. Dr. Ley, the energetic leader of the Labour Front, is one of the most powerful personalities in the Party Directorate, and one of the most contemptuous opponents of the Churches. He did not suppress the Catholic unions. His method was more subtle and also more simple. He simply proclaimed the impossibility of belonging to the German Labour Front and also to denominational organisations. Those who belonged to the latter were simply excluded from the former. The Labour Front is theoretically a purely voluntary association. But since the Law for the Organisation of Labour of January 20th, 1934, all engaged in industry, whether as workers or as employers, have been absorbed into it, and no one who wanted to obtain work could afford to keep out of it. The matter was put very simply by one of the district leaders in East Prussia.

"Here is the German Labour Front; there is the Catholic Labour Union. Here is work and bread; on the other side is the desertion of Germany and no right to work for bread." He went on to say that he would see to it that no one who belonged to the treacherous Catholic Unions should get any work.

The Bishops forcibly pointed out in a pastoral letter that to act thus was a breach of Article 31 of the Concordat, and that it was a gross injustice that men should be punished because they were true to their Church and were simply standing on their legal rights. They were well aware of the ideas that prevailed in the Labour Front, and they said that the Church could not agree that Catholic workmen should have their faith shaken in the Labour Front, or be prevented from the performance of their Sunday duty by participation in the "Strength through Joy" organisation. The organisation known as "Strength through Joy" is a rather remarkable scheme for enabling the poorest work people to get very cheap holidays, and to become acquainted with the beauties of their own country; though the workers are also taken on cruises to foreign countries. It is one of the best things that the Nazis have done, they have realised that the worker needs something besides good wages and health insurance. He needs mental stimulus and change, and they have discovered that if he has these he is better content with lower wages. It is said that some 6,000,000 people have been enabled to get away from drab surroundings by this means. But in the programmes of the gangs of workpeople that are carted about Germany religious observance finds no place.

At the end of 1934—on December 12th—General Goering, as Minister President of Prussia, issued an order which indicated a determination on the part of the State to limit severely the corporate activities of the Church. He said that Church organisations were being misused for profane purposes. Under cover of religious observances disturbing propaganda was unsettling the people and

Catholic societies were acting as a focus for enemies of the people. For this reason gatherings of an ecclesiastical character were now forbidden, except when they took place in churches, or were old established pilgrimages, or Christmas plays.

Grave difficulties were created because nobody knew what kind of meetings would be allowed and what not. A choir might meet together to practise. But if they invited their friends to hear them and to enjoy a social evening they came under the surveillance of the *Gestapo*.

During the summer of 1935 the Vatican made energetic protests against the interferences with the freedom of Catholics, and the breaches of the Concordat were denounced.

General Goering replied in July with an edict against "political Catholicism", in which he tried to represent all Catholic social activities as "political". "We do not tolerate," he said, "those endeavours which were formerly borne on the shoulders of the Centre Party. We fight against them even when they appear under the cloak of religious activity; we fight against them with the greater determination the more they clothe themselves in insidious and mendacious guises. Clerics who will not reconcile themselves with the political totality of National Socialism have, for example, been more and more frequently appropriating to their alleged 'struggle' in recent times the expressions, the coined phraseology, and the symbols of the National-Socialist struggle. They adopt abbreviations that have sunk into the flesh and blood of every fellow-German, such as H.J. for Hitler Youth, which they turn into H.J. for Heart of Jesus Youth, and B.D.M. (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*) for League of German Maidens, which becomes B.D.M. for League of Mary's Maidens; and they alter the German salute into a salute for Jesus Christ.

"Not content with the traditional Church solemnities, they are ever increasing the number of great demonstrative processions and Church festivals, for which they make a

propaganda and display never known in the past. They even mislead the fellow-citizens entrusted to their spiritual care into the use of sanctimonious invocations partly borrowed from National Socialism, such as 'Our Heavenly Leader, Jesus Christ, Treu Heil!'"

Other examples referred to by General Goering were the opposition to the Sterilisation Law. The clergy must not only abstain from criticising National Socialism, they must place themselves unreservedly behind it with their whole personality. Otherwise they could not be allowed to co-operate in teaching the young. He also threatened to suppress the "so-called Confessional Catholic Youth associations", unless they restricted their activities, and he reiterated the ban on uniforms and sporting activities. The Hitler Youth, he said, "had a great part to play in the final conquest of political Catholicism". The use of the expression "political Catholicism" was skilful, because there was a section of Catholic opinion that disapproved of the Centre Party. They were people who felt that the true mission of the Church is obscured by its identification with a political party and the awkward compromises almost inseparable from political life. Thus some of the most high-minded ecclesiastics and laymen saw the Centre Party dissolved without a pang. They did not at once perceive that its suppression was due to a profound enmity to the very substance of Christianity.

The point of General Goering's edict was that it was necessary to proceed against the clergy with energy but with circumspection, so that they should not become "martyrs". Goering has always been more alive to the dangers of a straight fight with religion than the other Party leaders have been.

On July 21st the Reich Minister of Justice circulated Goering's Prussian edict to prosecuting authorities all over Germany, urging them—in co-operation with the police—to proceed against "all endeavours of political Catholicism which aimed at the disintegration of the State and the disruption of the People's fellowship, wherever

they appear, without regard for the person and position of the culprit". They were to be careful not to make mistakes, but to act with energy all the same.

At about the same time the Reich Minister of Education issued a decree that in future no obligation should rest on pupils in higher schools to attend the customary morning devotions, Divine service, school Masses, and school festivals of a religious character, whether held on week-days or Sundays, in the school building or in a neighbouring church.

One of the most impressive features of Catholic life in Germany has been the remarkable way in which children in Catholic schools have attended Mass in large numbers every day in some neighbouring church before going to school.

General Goering had said that the Government did not wish for a *Kulturkampf*. But here it was with a vengeance!

In the following month (August 1935) the Bishops issued a letter from Fulda to the persecuted associations and organisations. They commended the Catholic Associations for their loyalty to the Church and the episcopate, and pledged themselves to stand by them. The Bishops, they said, had a special care for the Youth organisations. They wished them to be anchored in a strong faith and pure Christian morals, especially at a time when the German nation were in danger of losing the very ideas of a personal God, revelation, sin and redemption.

The Catholic Students' Corporation had been a grave disappointment to the episcopate. In January 1934, their leaders announced that they had taken the National Socialist revolution as their educational basis, and that therefore the denominational limitations would be removed. None the less the Catholic Students' unions were dissolved by the Government.

Even such activities as retreats came under the observation of the police. On the excuse that foreigners sometimes took part in them, Retreat Houses were ordered to furnish the Secret Police with the names of all who attended

retreats, and also all dioceses and convents were required to send lists of retreats.

These measures would seem to have reduced almost all Catholic social work to impotence. But things are not always what they seem in Nazi Germany. It is true that the measures taken against the Catholic workers' organisations and the students' unions gravely hindered their activities, and all who took part in them became henceforth suspicious characters, who might at any time receive the unwelcome attentions of the Secret Police. But suppression was not so easy; the tenacity and loyalty of the members of these religious organisations is to anyone who values human freedom one of the most encouraging features of modern Germany. Though greatly reduced in numbers, the faithful remnant found many subterranean ways of carrying on; and they were all the stronger because they had shed the lukewarm. This explains what will be seen later, and would otherwise seem very surprising, the issuing of fresh decrees suppressing bodies that had already been "suppressed".

"Political" Catholicism : The Attack on the Press

National Socialism has no greater enemy than free speech. From the first days of the victory of the Party a vast machinery of repression has been employed to suppress the free expression of opinion. On February 28th, 1933, the aged Hindenburg was induced to sign a decree, for which the Reichstag fire was the excuse. Ever since it has held the spirit of the German people in thrall. Its first paragraph is as follows:—"Articles 114, 115, 117, 123, 124, and 153 of the Constitution of the German Nation are suspended until further notice. Hence restrictions on personal liberty, freedom of speech and of the Press, of association and of assembly, as well as the interference with the secrecy of the postal, telegraph, and telephone service, and also confiscation of property and the right to search private houses are permissible beyond the limitations placed upon them in law."

The control of newspapers immediately began. At first it was the Social Democratic papers that were dealt with. These were either driven into bankruptcy or confiscated. Such papers as were allowed to appear were "co-ordinated" (*gleichgeschaltet*). The first manager of the Party, Max Amann, Hitler's old sergeant-major—another renegade Catholic—was made dictator of the Press, with the power of dismissing editors or reporters without reason given. Within a year a thousand papers were suppressed and several hundred others had voluntarily ceased publication. Those that remained had become merely Government gramophones. They might be called the *Vossische Zeitung* or the *Berliner Tageblatt* or the *Kölnischer Zeitung*, but their utterances achieved a complete monotony. They reproduced the views of Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda. Their unanimity was—and is—wonderful; as Dr. Goebbels says, the Press exhibits a splendid example of discipline. Though it may be added, the readers of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—that former pillar of German Liberalism—can still detect faint signs of something different by a resort to the methods of the "Higher Criticism".

The Roman Catholic Church had before the advent of the Third Reich a very fine and widely read Press. *Germania* and the *Kölnischer Volkszeitung* were, for example, well edited and well informed national papers that were influential organs of opinion as well as trustworthy purveyors of news. Though these and other papers were speedily "co-ordinated", they retained many of their original staff. Though acting with extreme discretion, they have not been able entirely to conceal the uneasiness of Catholics under the totalitarian regime. Max Amann shewed a special solicitude for the Catholic Press. An old Catholic paper *Der Badische Beobachter* was one of the first to go because it displayed the sacred monogram (Christus) on its front sheet. Highly significant was a judgment given by the Provincial Court of Duisberg (in the Catholic Rhineland) which condemned a Catholic paper on April 4th, 1934, because it was being used as

the mouthpiece of the Catholic clergy, and so disturbing the national unity, and confessional peace. "The Catholic Press," said the Court, "is now a completely superfluous phenomenon, though the purveying of purely Church matters by the Catholic Church papers will be allowed." At about the same time a Stuttgart paper, the *N. S. Kurier*, described the publication of a Catholic Press as mere sabotage of the National Socialist work of renewal. There could be no room in the National Socialist State for daily papers which professed to safeguard "Catholic interests".

In 1935 Amann carried things still further, by publishing a decree with the object, euphemistically described as "protecting the *independence* of Press publications", which he explained as follows:—"The Führer has demanded that religious and denominational matters shall be excluded from the political struggle. He has declared that the People expect from the servants of the Church care of souls not politics. The regulation and its publication shew the solid determination to safeguard the carrying out of this principle in the daily Press on all sides."

This regulation hit the Catholic Press specially hard. Denominational aims were repressed, and many of the personnel, both journalists and owners, were excluded from influence. Not all papers came completely under the ban at first, but little by little their activities were more and more circumscribed. As a Swiss paper observed, the *Kulturkampf* had forged for itself a sharp instrument and the dreams of von Papen, who saw himself as the controller of a far-reaching Catholic Press, when he made the way for Hitler's advent to power in 1933, were dissolved into thin air.

Germany was a country very rich in local papers, because of the old traditions of its provincial life. In Catholic parts many of these attempted to achieve a *modus vivendi* with the authorities, sometimes more, sometimes less successfully. Much in this—as in other matters—depended upon the temper of the local Governor or Gauleiter. Gradually many have been extinguished. In

1936, for example, the following papers ceased publication. The *Neue Pfälzische Landeszeitung* of Ludwigshafen (which was one of the most important Centre Party papers in the flourishing wine-growing district of the Palatinate), the *Neunkirchen Volkszeitung* in the Saar—one of the many “blessings” consequent upon the return of the Saar district to Germany—the *Sauerländer Neuesten Nachrichten* in the Ruhr, the *Speyern Zeitung* at Speyer, and the *Grenzzeitung* in Bavaria.

The Third Reich did not only concern itself with the German Press. The Secret Police and the Ministry of Propaganda kept a sharp eye on the foreign Press. From the first days of the regime, British, Dutch, French, and Swiss papers have been constantly confiscated, because they revealed facts that the Party leaders wished to conceal from the German public. The police have also expelled many foreign correspondents. By the middle of 1936 as many as fourteen had been got rid of in this way. Even men like Freiherr van der Schueren, the correspondent of the Dutch Catholic paper *De Maasbode*, who had always faithfully tried to report what he thought good in the Nazi regime, was expelled in May 1936.

The most famous case is that of Norman Ebbutt. Thoroughly understanding the true character of the National Socialist movement, he perceived at once the importance of the Church conflict. From the spring of 1933 till 1937, when he was at last expelled, he contributed a masterly series of dispatches to the *Times*, which made that paper—while he remained in Berlin—the authoritative chronicle of the struggle for religious freedom against the Nazi tyranny throughout the world. The English Liberal and Socialist Press, still too much under the influence of an old-fashioned anti-clericalism, were slow to perceive that, in a conflict which was primarily ideological, the opposition of the Churches has an importance that no merely political theory could have. The *Morning Post*, which was also very ably represented in Berlin, was the only other British paper that was first with the news

in this respect. But the space given to Ebbutt in the *Times*, the accuracy of his information, and the skill with which he presented it, made his paper the chief authority on the Church struggle—and not least in Germany itself. In the later stages the *Manchester Guardian* has often contained valuable first-hand information.

The Catholic Bishops rightly protested that these regulations were an infringement of the Concordat. They urged that a religion which is simply concerned with Heaven and takes no account of what is happening on earth is no religion at all. The Bishop of Trier, Dr. Bornewasser, called on his people still to read Catholic papers. "There still exists," he said, "a Catholic Press, even if it was no longer allowed to call itself such." But that was in the early days. The Bishops have had hard work to protect even their own diocesan gazettes.

"Political" Catholicism : The Church's Answer

The Bishops' protest was followed by an article in the *Osservatore Romano* on August 3rd. If there were Roman Catholics, said the Vatican organ, who had laid themselves open to censure, the natural step would have been to inform the Holy See instead of setting in motion the whole administrative, police and legal machinery because of a pretended political threat from the Catholic clergy. The State would no doubt be right in protecting the Church from a Godless movement, but it was by no means easy to shew that its power had been used in this way. "While some forms of disbelief, such as those of a Marxist tendency, are combated, other forms of anti-religion, in spite of their provocative hostility to Christianity and the Church, enjoy authoritative encouragement and favour." Facts, said the *Osservatore*, disprove General Goering's dislike of a *Kulturkampf*, not the least of which is the continuous hostile espionage employed against Catholic schools and associations. The only way to peace was to return to the Concordat.

On the very day before this article appeared, Dr. Goebbels had taken up General Goering's tale at a rally of 200,000 Nazis in the aerodrome of Essen-Mülheim. The first part was a tirade against the Jews, in the Propaganda Minister's usual elegant style. But he went on to attack the Churches—the combination was by this time becoming a regular practice, as it had for long been in the pornographic pages of the *Stürmer*.

"The Nazi movement stood," said Goebbels, "and would remain, from a religious point of view, on the ground of positive Christianity. But it demanded that the Churches should be politically positive National Socialists. It might be the duty of the Church to educate youth to religiousness, but the Nazi leaders could not give up the political training of youth, which belonged to the State. Nor would they allow any more Confessional newspapers. Germany does not want a *Kulturkampf*, but I have the impression that such a desire exists among a clique of the former Centre Party. The world will see, in the course of the next few weeks, how Germany will deal with such agitators. There is only one way for the Churches to safeguard peace—by serving God while the Nazis serve the nation."

The incitements of Dr. Goebbels bore fruit at Nuremberg on the following Sunday, when several thousand Storm Troopers spent three hours driving in motor lorries through the streets with large banners bearing inscriptions denouncing Jews and Roman Catholics as "enemies of the State" and displaying caricatures of priests shaking hands with Moscow. Similar demonstrations took place in the suburbs.

These Sunday exercises had been carefully prepared for by the distribution of leaflets ordering citizens to beflag their houses and to gather in crowds in the streets in order to give the impression of a popular and spontaneous demonstration. The results were—from the Nazi point of view—disappointing. Many houses were without flags, and there was no more than the usual Sunday street

crowd, who did not seem particularly impressed by what they saw. After all, Nuremberg is largely a Catholic city.

That very day an event occurred which shewed quietly but clearly the deep resentment aroused in Catholic circles by the unceasing campaign of slander and abuse.

In the Rhineland at Limburg on the banks of the Lahn, there rises one of the most exquisite examples of German Romanesque architecture, the cathedral of S. George, with its seven graceful spires, which was founded by the great Count Conrad Kurzbold in 1235. Large sums of money had been spent in restoring the cathedral and redecorating it in time for the 700th anniversary. On August 11th the cathedral was thrown open once more for public worship. The opening ceremony was a Pontifical High Mass celebrated by Cardinal Schulte, Archbishop of Cologne. The narrow streets of the picturesque little town were thronged with pilgrims, who had come from far and near, literally in their thousands. The medieval houses were covered with Church flags and a few also of the old German black, white and red National flag. Hardly a Swastika flag or a Nazi uniform was to be seen. It was quite impossible for all the worshippers to get into the building, which is not very large. But the Mass and the sermon were relayed to a dense throng in the square outside. The Bishop of Trier, Dr. Bornewasser, was the preacher. He asked whether the spirit that inspired the wonderful Churches of Germany had been passed on. The false philosophy of the last centuries up to the present day had substituted the creature for the Creator and had made man the centre and chief aim of the whole world and of all serious thinking. So far as Catholics were concerned, they would always be prepared to die for their faith. They were encouraged by observing the constant expansion of Catholicism. It was a matter of sore grief that a part of Catholic Youth had become alienated. But Roman Catholics were convinced that God would hear their prayers. He prayed that Limburg Cathedral might remain an abode of love, consolation, power, and courage

for Catholics in their daily fight for existence, especially in the present difficult times, when the Roman Catholic Church was being systematically defamed in several countries in a horrible manner, in order to divert the people from its truth and holiness.

This celebration was but the first of a series. On each of the following four Sundays a Pontifical Mass was celebrated. One day it would be the turn of the Men's Guilds, another of the Women's, and two of the boys and girls. The preachers were all bishops or abbots, including the Abbot of Maria Laach, the great Benedictine monastery in the Eifel district, which is the centre of a powerful religious movement and a wide Christian culture. On each occasion the worshippers numbered many thousands, who had come from all over Hesse and beyond. The width of the response and the depth of religious feeling displayed, especially by the young people, came as a surprising revelation to the Bishops of the loyalty of their people and of the resentment caused by the campaign of abuse.

Encouraged by this spontaneous manifestation of devotion, the Bishops gave a dignified answer to the charge of "political Catholicism" in a pastoral letter which was issued after their meeting at Fulda in August. "If the Bishops say to the Catholic people that all that contradicts a divine commandment is not allowed, this is not due to a thirst for political power, but is a duty of conscience. If the Bishops, taking their stand on the Concordat, ask for the 'liberty of the creed in the public practice of the Catholic religion' on account of a solemn treaty between the Holy Father and the German Government, and protect themselves against petty spying on Divine Service, then it is not a political struggle for power, but the claiming of a holy right on the basis of a treaty. If the clergy, seeing the matter clearly and definitely, oppose the new Paganism in a calm and conciliatory manner in their preaching, and reject the defamation of clergymen or a falsification of ecclesiastical history, then

it is not striving for power or thirst for domination, but a service to truth and the national welfare."

Defamation 1935 : The Smuggling Trials

The year 1935 witnessed an even more subtle attack on the prestige of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. As has been seen the charge of "political Catholicism" was an easy and obvious one to make. It had its roots in the past history of Germany. If successful, it would help to keep the Roman Catholic Church in its place, and this was all that the old Protestant National Prussian tradition had attempted. It was, in a sense, a legitimate political weapon, though, as has been seen, the accusation was used as a cover for actions which the older National tradition would have regarded as illegitimate.

But, even if successful, and even if interpreted according to Nazi ideas, the accusation could not lead to the results desired by the radical elements in the Party. They did not want merely to keep the Catholic Church in its place. They wished to destroy its influence; they wished to ruin its prestige. For this some much more far-reaching accusation was necessary, something that would—if possible—destroy its moral character.

However, a certain discretion had to be observed in this respect. There was the national unity to be considered. After all, one third of the German people is Catholic. It has constantly been observed that there has been a quietening down of the persecution of the Churches when some great coup in Nazi policy was in preparation. At the beginning of 1935 two matters were in the offing for which the support of the believing Church people of both Confessions was imperative.

At the beginning of 1935 the plebiscite in the Saar was to be taken. It was known that there was not anything like the same unanimity for a return to Germany as there had been before Hitler came into power. The Saar is a strongly Catholic district. It was vital that nothing should

be done to outrage the feelings of the Saarlanders. So, at the end of 1935, there had been a definite pause in anti-Church agitation. In January 1935 the plebiscite, conducted under the auspices of the League of Nations, returned the Saar to Germany, though the majority was smaller than it would have been had not a considerable section of Catholic opinion, to say nothing of liberal and socialist opinion, been alarmed by Nazi violence.

On March 1st national rejoicings at the recovery of the "lost land" took place all over Germany. This was no sooner safely accomplished than Hitler struck his first blow at the Treaty of Versailles. On March 16th, 1935, conscription was reintroduced into Germany.

On March 19th there suddenly broke out a concerted attack on the Religious Houses of Germany as nests of currency-smuggling. The convents were occupied by the police, and the terrified brothers and nuns were subjected to long examinations, lasting for hours and sometimes for days. When these were concluded, some hundred leaders of the Orders, both men and women, found themselves in prison.

In order to understand this extraordinary state of things, the economic policy of the Nazi regime must be borne in mind. When the financial tempest swept over Europe in 1931, the German Government—then led by Chancellor Brüning—had to take control of all foreign currency in order to avoid complete bankruptcy. When Hitler came into power this control was continued and used for a very different purpose. A system of autarchy or economic self-sufficiency was adopted on principle, because the chief aim of the regime was to prepare for war, and to that end it was necessary to make Germany completely financially independent of all other nations—or so it was thought. Economic self-sufficiency is fundamentally a military or war policy. Substitutes must be produced for those things with which Germany cannot supply herself, such as rubber and cotton. Many commodities are *Ersatz* (substitutes) to-day. Though great

ingenuity has been employed in creating them, the results are not very satisfactory, and certainly expensive. But the provision of substitutes takes time. The first step towards autarchy was to obtain control of foreign credits.

Already in June 1933 a *Law Against the Betrayal of German Economy* was passed, which imposed the severest penalties on anyone who concealed foreign assets. It was made a serious offence to send money out of the country except for purposes approved of by the Government. The consequence was that millions of pounds of foreign credits were frozen in Germany, and foreign creditors were unable to get their debts paid.

Dr. Schacht's dictatorship allowed certain selected societies and institutions to repay debts they owed abroad. But they had to do so at considerably enhanced values. Religious Orders and societies were not among the selected. They were placed in a specially difficult position because, in the poverty-stricken days after the War, and during the inflation period, many Catholic organisations such as "*Caritas*", the great system for tending the sick and unfortunate, in which a number of Religious Orders assisted, had borrowed money abroad to re-start their shattered work and to extend it. Dutch and Swiss religious houses lent their German brothers and sisters money, confident that they would be repaid. As times improved these repayments were gradually made. But when the law against the export of currency was passed, the Catholic Orders found themselves in a difficult position. Their consciences told them that they must pay their debts. The law forbade them to do so. A number of monks and nuns decided that they must obey the moral law rather than an ordinance that they regarded as immoral.

But there were other factors in an obscure situation. In addition to the repayment of debt there was the problem of missionary funds. Money subscribed, for example, in Switzerland or Holland for foreign missionary purposes would be sent to the headquarters of the missionary organisation concerned, which might be in Munich or

Cologne. Such moneys would under the new law not be transferrable again outside the country. Yet from the moral—it might be said, from the common sense—point of view, these moneys would be in transit only.

Then again, the currency laws are exceedingly technical, and can only be properly understood by lawyers who have made a special study of them. Where there is so much uncertainty a law has less claim on conscience. It was hardly reprehensible if those responsible—in view of all these circumstances—gave themselves the benefit of the doubt.

It is open to question whether they judged rightly in taking up this attitude. The currency had to be conveyed secretly across the frontier. If any priest or religious was found doing it, they laid themselves open to the charge of being *Devisenschieber*, currency profiteers. Some seem to have been influenced by a desire to get their resources into a safe place, before the confiscation that they were constantly dreading took place. One thing is certain in regard to the smuggling trials. A friendly, or indeed a reasonably just, Government would have adopted much milder measures in dealing with cases where there was so much uncertainty. As so often in Nazi Germany, the administration of the law is from point of view of equity far more questionable than the conduct of the accused.

During the summer and autumn of 1935 a whole series of trials for currency smuggling were held, and given wide publicity, with the object of holding up the Catholic Church to obloquy as anti-patriotic in outlook, traitors who were cutting at the root of the financial security of Germany. The most prominent victim was Dr. Legge, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meissen, in Saxony, whose episcopal residence is at Bautzen, near the Saxon-Czechoslovak frontier. He was supposed to have been concerned in smuggling currency. The arrest of a Bishop was a serious matter, and so it was performed at Altenburg by the Public Prosecutor himself. Dr. Legge was allowed to return to his home to order the affairs of his diocese, and he drove in his own motor car to prison.

There were some sixty trials in all, and everything was done by the Ministry of Propaganda to make them as sensational as possible. But they failed to produce as bad an impression as was designed. It was seen to be a misuse of language to condemn as "currency profiteers" people who were either merely paying their debts—or at the worst removing their capital to a place of safety. As the total sum of money involved was small, it could not by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as endangering the German economic system. Moreover, it was known that there were many people—and sometimes people high in power in the Nazi world—who had really profited in currency on a large scale.

The attacks indeed often aroused sympathy, because it was understood that they were attacks on organisations that were unselfishly performing valuable philanthropic work.

The most notable of these works is the remarkable organisation called *Caritas*, which extends its influence for good over the whole of Catholic Germany. It is served by some 80,000 members of Religious Orders, who minister in more than fifteen hundred hospitals and sanatoria, to say nothing of hundreds of crèches, schools for delicate children, orphanages and works of mercy of all kinds. Its annual budget reaches 150 million marks. An organisation which does so much for the welfare of the German people—and incidentally saves the State so much money—is too deeply embedded in the respect and affection of thousands in all classes to have its prestige seriously disturbed by the attacks on the "Devisenschieber."

An interesting light on the "currency trials" is derived from an article which appeared in *Finanz und Wirtschaft*, a Swiss financial paper, on December 14th, 1935. It described the currency trials as stranger than a cow with two heads. The crimes with which the members of Religious Orders were charged was merely that they changed the money of their own country into that of a foreign country, which according to normal law is no crime at all. As

the monks and nuns had borrowed the money from foreigners they naturally wished to repay it in the currency of their creditors. So the astonishing position was reached that a German citizen found himself in a house of correction simply because he wished to repay his foreign creditor in an honourable manner. Jurisprudence of this kind turned law upside down. The creditors of Germany in other lands would do well to take note of the situation. It was impossible to discover from day to day what was and what was not allowed in relation to German currency.

The *Neue Züricher Zeitung* drew the deduction that the aim of the trials must be to bankrupt the Religious Orders. This may have been one of the original ideas behind the trials. Large fines were certainly imposed. But in course of time the trials died away, when they failed to produce the defamatory results that were hoped for.

The Orders have been handicapped financially by various restrictions. Yet they have for the most part been able to carry on; though great monasteries continually live in a state of apprehension lest the authorities should suddenly descend upon them, turn them out of house and home, and confiscate all their property.

Caritas has specially suffered. One of its principal ways of raising funds has been by street collections, which brought in large sums of money, contributed in small sums by all sorts of people who appreciated the good work that the brothers and sisters were doing. Before the Nazi Government the *Caritas* Society had been allowed to take collections in the streets for a whole week. In June 1936 this was reduced to two days only. In December of that year the Reichs and the Prussian Ministry instructed the police to enquire into these collections in order to discover whether they were harmful to the street-collections in aid of public welfare. These special collections are what is known as "Winter Help", which are such a tiresome feature of the city life of modern Germany. Every day and all day brown-shirted men ceaselessly shake their collection boxes in the faces of the passengers at the railway stations and

in the streets and cafés. The avowed purpose of "Winter Help" is to relieve the poor. Whether this is the only object to which the money goes, it would be impossible to say. But one thing is certain, the Nazi can tolerate no work of charity that does not bring money and prestige into the Party organisation.

Another hindrance that was put in the way of the philanthropic work of the Catholic Church was the dissolution of that branch of the work of *Caritas* which enabled poor people to insure for burial expenses. This was a very popular activity, and one that brought a great many of the poorest in touch with the Church. For this reason it was suppressed in November 1936, and the existing insurances were forcibly transferred to the big insurance companies.

Another work of *Caritas* that has been denied to it is the very successful Employment Bureau that it carried on. This was suppressed in 1936 by the President of the Reichs Institution for Procuring Work.

Despite all these hindrances *Caritas* continues its good work with great devotion. Though much circumscribed in the extent of its activities, the *Caritas Verband* is steadily supported by faithful Catholics.

The tenacity with which Catholics hold on to their organisations is illustrated by an announcement made in July 1936, by the Honour and Discipline Court of the German Labour Front of the "Gau" of Northern Westphalia (a district where there are many Catholics). "Once again," it runs, "we emphatically point out that the decree of Dr. Ley, Reichsleader of the German Labour Front, according to which, all members of the German Labour Front are forbidden to belong at the same time to Confessional professional unions, is still in force. No members of the German Labour Front may belong to the following organisations: (1) The Catholic Workers' Union, (2) The German Kölping Family (Kölping was the founder of the Catholic Workers' Unions), (3) The West German Journeymen's Union, (4) the Catholic

Commercial Men's Union, (5) The Union of Catholic Saleswomen and officials." All members of these unions were ordered to leave them immediately.

Defamation 1936 : Immorality Trials

In 1936 the efforts of the Nazi Party to discredit the Roman Catholic Church took a singularly unpleasant form. When interest in the "Devisen" trials began to die down another hare was started, and one that sprang directly out of those trials. When the papers of the convents and the diocesan offices were ransacked in order to find evidence of currency smuggling, certain dossiers were found reporting cases of immorality which had been dealt with by the ecclesiastical authorities. Some of the accused had been expelled, and some, after discipline, had been restored to their position. Here, thought the Nazi propaganda leaders, was a glorious opportunity for damaging the character of the Church. The persons named were arrested and put on trial, with as much publicity as possible. Disgusting details were published at length, with the professed aim of purifying the Church, and this, in spite of the fact that the Nazis had loudly claimed that they had cleansed all the publications of Germany. This, incidentally, was a claim difficult to substantiate in view of the steady support given by the Nazi authorities to Herr Julius Streicher's infamous paper *Der Stürmer*, the whole tone of which is definitely pornographic. Though it has more than once been suspended for breaches of morality, it always appears again, and carries on its campaign of disgusting abuse of Jews and Catholic priests with shameless effrontery. The cartoons are physically revolting. Yet they can be seen exposed to view in an official manner in every village in Germany, and it is no uncommon—though a tragic—sight to see groups of children round them, drinking in the disgusting details. It is one of the most shameful aspects of Nazi Germany. Decent Nazis are revolted by *Der Stürmer*, as can be seen

by the following protest made by a German mother in an official Nazi women's journal, *Die Deutsche Kämpferin*: "We must earnestly consider whether the souls of the young are not subjected to profound harm through the brutal representations, in image and wood, of sexual crime and bestial atrocities of every sort such as are posted up in every street. One can almost always see such boards surrounded by children of all ages and hear them expressing opinions on them." And Streicher, it must be remembered, has never ceased to be governor of the Frankenland. He is always singled out for special honour at the Nuremberg Party Congresses, and his portrait constantly appears side by side with that of Hitler. The existence of *Der Stürmer*, and its official backing, shew the claim to uphold morality constantly made during the trials of 1936 to be nothing but nauseating hypocrisy.

The Propaganda Ministry ordered German editors to give "due prominence" to the "morality" prosecutions. Those who did not obey must take the consequences. The newspapers, by official order, came out with flaming headlines designed to suggest that all priests are immoral, and that decent people should have nothing to do with them. The attack concentrated specially on the Religious Orders. If these could be discredited, a far-reaching blow would be inflicted on the work of the Roman Catholic Church.

The charges chiefly related to one particular community, that of the Franciscan brothers at Waldbreitbach. They were not regular members of the Franciscan Order, and not priests, but were a community of lay brothers founded by a layman with the object of looking after the mentally deficient. Some of the charges were true, though for the most part they belonged to a remote past. The brotherhood was paying the penalty for admitting as workers during the inflation period, out of pity, men who were without employment, without sufficient enquiry into their moral stability. The trials began at Coblenz on May 26th before the Penal Court and continued for many

weeks. Two hundred members of the brotherhood were charged. But only a few were condemned, despite the utmost efforts of the prosecution. Sentences varied from five months to eight years' imprisonment. One curious feature of the trials was that those who had left the brotherhood were usually let off with light sentences because they had afterwards been good workers for the National Socialist cause—which throws a valuable light on the motives and principles of those who staged the trials. A number of other trials against individual priests were promoted in other places.

After the Waldbreitbach affair the *Gestapo* tried to hunt out similar scandals on their own account. A typical case occurred in Silesia. Silesia, it should be said, is legally in a somewhat different position from the rest of Germany. It was assigned to Germany as a result of the plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the League after the War, and therefore special conditions prevail there. The Nuremberg race laws, for example, do not apply in Silesia. During September 1936, the *Gestapo* made an attack on the homes of the Brothers of Mercy at Breslau, Pilchowitz and Neustadt, where the Brothers maintain up-to-date hospitals, which stand high in popular esteem. Some of the Brothers were arrested. In preparation for the trial the Secret Police examined individuals who had been patients at these hospitals during the preceding four years, and attempted to make them bear witness to immorality on the part of the Brothers. Their failure was complete, and the trials had to be abandoned, and the Brothers were released.

Other efforts to manufacture evidence did not always meet with success. Parishioners came out strongly in defence of their pastors. The Catholic Press, though it had been "co-ordinated", limited itself to the compulsory minimum in reporting the Coblenz trials, even though the editors were threatened by Goebbels with being struck off the professional list on account of "passive resistance to the orders of the Propaganda Ministry". These attempts at defamation, and at including the whole clergy in such

accusations, roused the strongest feeling in Catholic circles. The prosecuting counsel were inundated with letters of protest. When the editors of the *Schwarze Korps* sent special reporters to write up the Coblenz trial, they were startled to find how violent was the reaction in the strongly Catholic Rhineland against the methods employed. They were compelled to report that "the simple pious wine-grower" was more impressed by the arguments of the Church authorities than by the slanders.

The Bishops appealed to the loyalty of their flocks with confidence. Count von Galen, Bishop of Münster, wrote a pastoral letter which was read in all the pulpits of his diocese on June 21st. He described the campaign of abuse in the Press as "a danger to youth, a source of offence to all decent-minded people, and an unjust insult to the honour of all innocent members of the Orders concerned." It was impossible that scandals should not occur. But Catholics were foremost in condemning transgressions, especially when committed by priests and monks. "True, they condemn them with an undertone of sorrow." He was convinced that Catholics who knew personally the good work and upright lives both of the secular priests and of the 75,000 sisters and 3,000 brothers who work in the service of the *Caritas* would not because of the weakness of a few allow themselves to be shaken in their respect for all the members of the Orders who devoted themselves selflessly to the service of the poor and sick people of every kind.

Cardinal Faulhaber was even more trenchant. He condemned roundly the moral failings of the few, and promised that the ecclesiastical courts would deal strictly with any cases brought to its notice. He carried the war into the enemies' camp. "We must confront those who lash up public opinion and want to make these sad occurrences the starting point of a new Catholic agitation with the challenge: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.'" And he went on, "Among the simple people it is asked whether among other ranks of our people

there are none but moral paragons". After all, the German people had not all forgotten the incidents of June 30th, 1936, or the reasons that were officially given for the shooting of Röhm and Heines, and many of them knew quite well that those reasons had always been there, and had in no way stood in the way of their reaching the highest posts in the Nazi Party.

The Catholic authorities were able to point to cases of immorality in connection with the Nazi camps of more recent date which had been hushed up, and they were not without evidence that made them look with suspicion on certain aspects of the Youth movement. Indeed it was said by some that one of the main aims was an offensive-defensive, to draw away attention from dark shadows that have always hung over the leadership of the Nazi movement.

When vast quantities of mud is thrown some of it sticks. There is no doubt that in quarters where the Catholic clergy were not known personally the campaign of unscrupulous abuse produced a considerable effect, especially because in this—as in so many other matters in the Third Reich—the true state of affairs was concealed from the people by the efforts of propaganda and control of the Press. In one Bavarian village, for example, the Town Council decided to change the name of a street called Franciscan Street. But among Catholics as a whole the effect of the mean stratagem was practically nil. I was told by a leading Catholic that those with whom he came into contact were so incensed that they refused to believe a word of the charges, whereas there was a grain of truth in them. Moreover, decent people of all kinds were antagonised by the palpable pandering to the lowest instincts by the Ministry of Propaganda.

Thus the immorality campaign was in its total effect as little of a success as the currency smuggling ramp had been. The Church remained unshaken by the later as much as the earlier attempt at defamation.

CHAPTER IX

CATHOLIC RESISTANCE

The basis of all German education is the recognition of the fact that it was not Christianity that brought us morality, but that Christendom has to thank the German character for its permanent values.

ROSENBERG:

Myth of the Twentieth Century, p. 636

The Bishops' Dilemma

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS were for long drawn in two directions. As Catholic Bishops it was their duty to make every effort to live on good terms with the State in which they lived—to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Especially was this the case when, as in Germany, the relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the State were supposed to be regulated by a Concordat. On the other hand they were bound to oppose the strongly Pagan movement and also—just because a Concordat existed,—to stand firm against any infringements of the rights guaranteed to the Church.

The Bishops had endured great provocation. They were the victims of a stream of abuse. Some members of the episcopate had even been in danger of personal violence. Shots were fired into Cardinal Faulhaber's house in Munich one day, and though the position of the bullets shewed that they must have been fired not by some chance passer-by, but with deliberate intent from the house opposite, no serious attempt was made by the authorities to run the criminal to earth.

Twice in April 1935 the palace of the Bishop of Würzburg was invaded by excited crowds. The Bishop, Dr. Ehrenfried,

faced the mobs with great courage, though at the risk of his life. Despite the protests of his clergy, the causes of the riots were never investigated, nor were the instigators brought to book.

Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg, in Breisgau, had steadily tried to come to terms with the Nazi Government for quite a long time after they came into power. But in September 1935, he had to lodge a formal complaint against the plastering of the ecclesiastical buildings in his see-city with such expressions as "The Black Traitors should be hanged".

Count von Galen, Bishop of Münster, has been specially the object of hatred to the extreme Nazis, because of his courageous stand for the Christian Faith. Rosenberg has been particularly violent in his attacks. When thousands of the faithful in his diocese organised a procession to express their appreciation of his leadership, he thanked them, and reminded them that sixty years before, a Bishop of Münster had been put in prison because he refused to disobey his conscience, and he assured them that he was quite prepared to endure shame for the name of Jesus, whatever form it might take.

By ancient custom a procession is held at Münster in July as an act of thanksgiving for the salvation of the city from plague and fire 550 years ago. When this time-honoured observance took place in July, 1936, the Reichs Minister of the Interior, Herr Frick, forbade officials to take part in it, and the police did their best to prevent the procession being a success. The Bishop described what happened in his sermon at the Cathedral.

"When we arrived at the Cathedral square at the end of the procession, after Münster had done homage to the King of the whole world, I saw that the police had roped off a great part of the Cathedral square, and were keeping guard there. The police never used to do this. Neither I nor the Chapter, nor the leaders of the procession had been previously informed of the intention of the police to rope off the Cathedral square. The way, too, from the Cathedral to the episcopal palace had been roped off. It

is easy to conclude from this that the police intended to prevent you from accompanying me home, that they want to separate you from your Bishop. I beg you to submit to force, and to renounce your intention of accompanying me home. I do not want a repetition of what happened on a similar occasion, on the evening of Trinity Sunday, when innocent onlookers, faithful Catholics, who had done nothing but greet their Bishop, were beaten and arrested. But I must add this—if anyone thinks that he can separate you from me and me from you by external force, by ropes and police measures, he is very much mistaken.”

The Bishop was loudly cheered by the great congregation in the Cathedral as he passed out.

The Fulda Pastoral and Nazi Reaction

It is not surprising that the Bishops approached their autumn meeting at Fulda with grave anxiety. An illuminating sidelight is thrown on their state of mind by an article that appeared in the Viennese Catholic paper, the *Reichspost*, on July 2nd, 1936. It was from the pen of a high ecclesiastic in close touch with German affairs, and obviously eager to come to terms with the Nazi regime if that were in any way possible. The author attempted to distinguish between “positive” and “negative” National Socialism. It was an appeal to Hitler to dissociate himself from the “left-radical” wing, consisting of the former Bolshevik element—the “Bolshevists in brown shirts”. But as he recognised that the leaders in the *Kulturkampf* were Rosenberg, Himmler, von Schirach, Ley, Goebbels, and Frick, Hitler’s greatest friends, the plea was somewhat hopeless. The most significant things in the article were such admissions as the following from one who had been at sympathy with the Third Reich. “That we have to deal with a consciously and clearly thought-out mass attack on Catholicism is seen at a glance by considering the way in which the Press, which is influenced by the left-radical element reports the

morality trials. . . . How can one come to a confessional peace with National Socialism, in spite of all endeavours and attempts, when black clouds darken the horizon? While these prosecutions occupy the public, the left-radical wing, supported by the National Church movement in Essen and the adherents of the German Faith movement make use of the time for furthering of its own ends. In innumerable towns Confessional schools are done away with; hundreds of convent sisters who were occupied as teachers have become unemployed; charitable undertakings have become non-existent because their funds have been stopped; Catholic parish sisters and nurses have been replaced by others. A truly diabolical plan this, to condemn the active powers of the Church to complete inactivity for a lengthy period, or at least to hinder the success of its activities, in order to be able in the meanwhile to realise their policy undisturbed—a policy that in every way thoroughly contradicts the National Socialist Party programme and still more the explicit words of the highest leader. What then remains of positive Christianity, if these dark, left-radical elements have to take charge of the 'cultural' education of the people?"

The outcome of the Fulda Conference was a powerful appeal by all the Bishops for the Confessional School. The Pastoral letter was preceded by the following moving appeal.

"To-day in the German Lands a struggle has flamed up over our highest and holiest possessions. Among these possessions, which we have inherited from our forefathers and which we treasure and guard as a holy legacy, is the Confessional School.

"Unfortunately during this last year there have been serious attacks on the existence of the Confessional School in some of the Provinces (Bavaria, Württemberg, Hesse). Unfortunately the opponents of the Confessional School have attempted to eviscerate the Confessional schools that have still remained. Complaints multiply concerning utterances, by which the religious feelings of the children

are seriously injured. In some places religious pictures and crucifixes have been removed from the schools. In many departments the Christian character of the Confessional School has been destroyed by the books and syllabuses of teaching that are in use."

"(1) To demand the Confessional School is an obligation of conscience for Catholics. That is the central point. It has been so defined by Pius XI, and it is laid down in the Canon Law, because religious faith, which is the Catholics highest possession, must inform the whole of life. The "mixed religion" school makes this impossible, because it breeds indifference, as experience shews. In them outside the strictly religious instruction no word may be said about Christ and the Church, in order not to hurt the feelings of others who may be Protestants or followers of the "German Faith". "If freedom of conscience is not just a word in the German Lands,—then this demand for a Confessional school, which is made by the Catholic people as an obligation of conscience, dare not be neglected, then it may not happen that many thousands of faithful Catholic Germans are driven into the gravest distress of conscience."

(2) Catholics also demand Confessional schools in the name of justice and fidelity to contracts. The Confessional School is deeply anchored in German law. The Führer had in the most solemn manner and in the face of the whole world declared that "the National Government saw in the two Christian Confessions the most weighty factors in the maintenance of the German people". He had specifically promised that the Christian Confessions should have their accustomed influence in school and education; its care would be the upright co-operation between Church and State. This promise was embodied in Articles 23 and 24 of the Concordat. The Catholic schools stood thus on the rock of the Law. No one of us supposes that in German Lands sacred covenants will be despised.

(3) The criticisms of the Confessional schools will not hold water. People must not be misled by slogans, as, for example, that the Confessional School drives a wedge into

the Community of the People (*Volksgemeinschaft*). The opposite is true. It is religion that has made Germany great. The Führer had himself said that Christianity is "the unshakable foundation of the moral life of our people". It is the business of the Confessional School to strengthen these foundations. It is no enemy of the Community of the People. How can the love of People, Home and Fatherland be deeply rooted, how can responsibility for the People and the State be better grounded, how can the duty of loyalty and sacrifice for the community be better known than in the place where young people learn to be loyal to Folk and Fatherland because they are loyal to our Lord God? Another false slogan is that the unholy religious cleavage is deepened by the Confessional School, because in the Confessional School religious conviction is strengthened, and respect for the sincere religious convictions of others is aroused. In the *Simultanschule*, on the other hand, when children are separated for the period of religious instruction, the Confessional cleavage of the German children is continually brought before the children's notice.

The Pastoral letter closed with an appeal to parents to guard the children's faith.

The last point was perhaps the weakest in the Bishops' armoury. Where they were undoubtedly on the right lines was in their criticism of the kind of teaching given in the Community schools. Since the letter was published, that teaching has become more and more infected with the racial heresy and an anti-Christian bias.

This letter of the Bishops roused Rosenberg to action, or at any rate rhetoric. One of his assistants, Alfred Miller, wrote an article in the *Durchbruch* at the time of the Nuremberg Party Day which described the episcopal letter as a piece of demagogy. Christianity, he asserted, had always been the fertile soil of Bolshevism. The National Socialist "pagans" had pushed the cure of souls back to the church doors. "The time is coming to an end when the pastors of the Church in their gold-adorned robes carried on an

exceedingly profitable breeding of little lambs which brought them much worldly gain. The division between Church rights and the totalitarian claim of the State would soon become absolutely clear and definite." The Bishops could not have wished for any better confirmation of their fears than this elegant but characteristic diatribe.

If Miller's collocation of Christianity and Bolshevism seems surprising, what is to be made of an utterance in *Der Blitz*, organ of German Action, which appeared about the same time? "The iconoclast raging about in Spain is the Asiatic Jew, who, as a Bolshevik, can only satisfy his murderous instincts where Rome and its Jehovah-religion have prepared the soil. For is it not an open secret that Bolshevism's most fruitful fore-runner is Christianity? The force of the Bolshevik philosophy and policy lies in the race- and blood-shaming insanity which the deification of Judaism by Christianity is." The wheel has come full circle.

But to return to the Bishops' Pastoral letter. When it was distributed in the diocese of Cologne, Cardinal Schulte added a statement on the Waldbreitbach affair.

The Bishops did not merely exhort their followers to stand by the schools, they also made another determined effort to come to terms with the Government. The moment was regarded as favourable because the Government was now deeply committed to obtaining a grip on Spain. In order to justify this a renewed drive against Communism was necessary, and, where Spain was concerned, it must, for propaganda purposes, be combined with defence of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Bishops' Pastoral told the contents of the memorandum. It affirmed their Christian loyalty to the State, but at the same time it shewed how severely that loyalty was tried by the disintegration of religious life and the insults heaped on the Church without let or hindrance. The Bishops heartily condemned Bolshevik excesses in Spain. But they pointed out that, if they were to fight Bolshevism, it would be useless to do so in the name of a modern

Weltanschauung, which usurped falsely and without right the quality of a religion, and which had no light for the mind nor moral power. "For the God who is set up in place of the only true Christian God is after all only ourselves, blood of our blood, or rather a figment of human fantasy. What is the meaning of a God whose creator is man himself and not the other way round? Communism cannot be combated by weapons of war, but only by a deeper faith in the Beyond, in a personal, eternal God, in Jesus Christ, and His Church. Whoever does not repulse Bolshevism in the religious sphere will open the door for it both politically and economically. And no temporal power can close it again."

The only response of the Government was to confiscate copies of the Pastoral letter. This was not very encouraging to the idea that the time had arrived for a *modus vivendi*. Yet, at the same time, parts of it were published in the Essen paper, which is General Goering's organ. One of the most curious facts of the Totalitarian regime in Germany is the publication by the principal leaders each of his own newspaper; and they do not always speak with precisely the same accents. General Goering, owing to his relations with the Reichswehr, represents a right wing of the Party, which wished to avoid open conflict with the Church, because such a conflict weakened the military strength of Germany.

The Bolshevik Bogey

The *Schwarze Korps*, the organ of Himmler and the S.S., took quite a different line. It denied all rumours that there was to be an end of the *Kulturkampf*. "There never," it said, "can be a compromise between *Weltanschauungen*, if they are not to be untrue to their own principles. It must be decided by the strength and intensity of their ideas." Christianity is closely akin to Bolshevism because it believes in internationalism and raceless humanity.

The Bishop of Münster took up these various points very skilfully and courageously in a sermon that he preached on August 30th, after the Bishops' Pastoral had been read. He quoted the *National Zeitung*, the *Schwarze Korps* and also the official paper of the Hitler Youth. Replying to the last-named, he said that no doubt its writers were too young to know how effective the Catholic Workers' Union had been in countering Communist propaganda. And he then asked some pointed questions. "We are told that Communism has been completely annihilated in Germany since 1933. Why, then, are the Catholic Bishops reproached because they do not continually in their Pastoral letter denounce erroneous doctrines which were completely suppressed so long ago? If it was right for the *National Zeitung* to quote passages from the Pastoral letter, why have the Secret Police prevented its publication in the Münster Catholic weekly? In order that our national comrades and more especially Catholics might study the Pastoral letter I have produced it as a pamphlet. Why have the Secret Police confiscated at the printing press the copies of a publication that the Essen paper thought worthy of quotation?"

There is something ironical in the whole of this controversy about Bolshevism. There never had been a real Bolshevik danger since 1919, as Catholics fully recognised. It is true that the Communist vote reached six millions in the inflation period. But many who voted Communist were not convinced Marxists. They were merely making a gesture of despair. A Government which had at its disposal the exceedingly efficient Reichswehr and an excellent and dependable police force never stood in the slightest danger from the mixed multitude who made up the so-called Communist party. If they had been equally firm against the Nazi revolution, subsequent history would have been different—and happier.

The real difficulty inherent in all this discussion is that terms were—and are—used in different senses. When the Bishops said Bolshevism, they meant Bolshevism. But in the mouth of Hitler, Himmler and the *Schwarze Korps* the

word meant democracy. When Hitler came out at the Nuremberg Party Day with a violent denunciation of Bolshevism, the *Cologne Catholic Weekly* made the following pertinent observation. "The difference between Bolshevism and many varieties of our spiritual aggressors against the Church can now be detected only with the aid of a magnifying glass!"

When the Catholic Press Congress took place at Rome in the autumn, no representative of the Catholic Press in Germany was allowed to be present. Cardinal Pacelli, in greeting the Congress, deplored this fact, and said, "We cannot understand how, after the German Bishops' latest Pastoral letter, the Catholic Press in Germany should be intimidated, restricted and hindered in their apostolate against Bolshevism. One might suppose that there is a conscious intention of dedicating the Catholic Press in Germany to destruction. We greet all the more heartily the Press of the German language in the person of the representative of Austria."

An Austrian Attempt at Reconciliation

A curious sidelight on the efforts to effect a reconciliation between the Roman Catholic Church and National Socialism came from Austria about this time. The suffragan Bishop of Aela, Dr. Hudal, wrote an article in which he had pleaded for a common front between the Church and National Socialism against Bolshevism, and he had protested against linking Bolshevism and National Socialism together as twin enemies. The article was distributed by a Press Agency in Vienna, but in a garbled form, which omitted all references that the Bishop had made to the necessity for a change in the outlook of National Socialism in respect of cultural questions. Bishop Hudal belonged to a circle which—encouraged by the Austro-German pact of July 11th—was anxious to minimise all differences, in order to promote union between Austria and Germany. But nothing could conceal the fact that his article, even in its unexpurgated

form, ran contrary to the stand already taken by the Pope when he linked Bolshevism and National Socialism together in addressing the Spanish refugees. It was no less contrary to the declarations of the Diocesan Bishops who were utterly opposed to the *Anschluss*, just because it would involve persecution of the Church. The Vienna Catholic *Reichspost* refused to publish Bishop Hudal's article.

In view of subsequent events it is interesting to recall that the Bishop of Linz, Dr. Gfoellner, had, shortly after the signature of the Austro-German pact, gone out of his way to publish in his diocesan gazette two proclamations that the Dutch Roman Catholic Bishops had made against National Socialism. In these documents Catholics who became National Socialists were excommunicated!

Bishop Hudal, however, followed up his article by a book on the same lines, though he inserted in the preface the somewhat strange statement that the book was intended for Germany, only, and not for other countries where similar movements exist. The Bishop's main contention was that there is a fundamental difference between the Right and the Left Wings of the National Socialist Movement, and that it is possible to distinguish the political ideals of the Movement from the *Weltanschauung*, which is the mark of the left-wing. He also contrasted the radical leaders with the "conservative" Führer. There is a certain element of truth in the former contention. There are, of course, many National Socialists who do not share the Nazi ideology, at any rate in its most extreme form. But what the Bishop failed to enquire into was where the direction of the Movement comes from. A significant gap in his study of the subject was the omission of Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century* from the "official leading National Socialist literature". The *Myth*—with its circulation of 650,000—stands beside *Mein Kampf* as part of the Nazi "Sacred Books". Moreover Rosenberg is the most prolific of the Nazi writers, and the editor of the official newspaper. Rosenberg's authoritative position in the movement is the irrefragable proof of the dominance of the *Weltanschauung*, which

declares that the unity of the People completely excludes any such rival loyalty as is required by either the Catholic or the Evangelical Church. Rosenberg's position in the party is not due to his personal popularity—it is said that most of the other leaders dislike him—it is due entirely to Hitler's devotion to the man, whom he regards as the inspired philosopher of the Movement. And that—though *Mein Kampf* is itself sufficient evidence to the contrary—disposes of the idea that Hitler and the *Weltanschauung* are different things. Hitler is a very astute politician. He knows when to dissimulate and to temporise. He has known how to kindle the socialist enthusiasm of the small man, while making the Third Reich safe for the big industrialists. But it would be less than fair to suggest for a moment that he does not believe in the *Weltanschauung* with all the passion of his very emotional personality, as it would be less than respectful to his force of character not to recognise that he is ultimately the sole director of the whole vast machine for subduing all rival loyalties—under his own leadership—to the worship of the supreme divinity of a racially "pure" community of all the German Folk wherever they may be, whose destiny it is to teach and rule the world.

The reception given to Bishop Hudal's book is indeed but another proof of this diagnosis. Some of the Party writers referred to the book as an Austrian Bishop's positive attitude towards National Socialism. Others were definitely antagonistic. The *Durchbruch* described it as an interference in German internal affairs which have nothing to do with the Roman Catholic Bishop. The *Blitz*, the organ of *Völkische Action* was even more explicit. "The offer of the Roman Catholic Church to wage war shoulder to shoulder with National Socialism against Bolshevism would mean an unsupportable burden for National Socialism, if it accepted the offer. How would the German Reich be able to enforce the strict observation of its race laws on the German people, if at the same time it were obliged to propagate the Christian phantom of the equality of all men? How could one hope that the union of all national forces, which is indispensable

for the struggle for Honour, Freedom and the Future, and which has become a reality through National Socialism, could prove to be lasting, if the Christian claim to the pre-eminence of the Hereafter remains uncontradicted as an eternal truth, and is represented as the duty of all people with the approval of the State?" But the Party authorities took good care that this book was hard to obtain in Germany. In the end it was completely suppressed in the Reich. Useful for Austria, may be, but in the Third Reich an unnecessary complication seemed to be the verdict. The incident shews how small room there can be in Nazi Germany even for a politically friendly Catholicism.

The Primate of Austria, Dr. Waitz, the Prince Archbishop of Austria, was in no doubt where he stood. He protested against the suffragan Bishop's articles in the *Reichspost*; and, when Hudal's book appeared, the Archbishop published a statement in the *Salzburg Catholic Weekly* to the effect that articles or books that expressed a judgment on National Socialism different from that of the Austrian episcopate—which had been made perfectly plain—were not inspired by ecclesiastical authority, nor would they be countenanced by it.

Faulhaber and Hitler

While these discussions were going on, the German Bishops, none the less, persevered with their efforts to reach a *modus vivendi* with Hitler. The Fulda conference appointed the three Cardinals, Breslau, Munich, and Cologne, to initiate discussions, and Cardinal Faulhaber actually succeeded in getting an interview with Hitler.

Though the interview lasted for three hours, no advance was made. The Cardinal laid before the Führer the many definite examples of breaches of the Concordat and the serious spiritual and material handicaps from which German Catholics were suffering. He re-affirmed strongly their political loyalty and devotion to the Fatherland. But he did not fail to point out the severe strain to which it was being subjected, and the danger to national unity that

lurked there. He also cited the parallel of Italy as proof that there was no fundamental incompatibility between a totalitarian State and the freedom of the Church. Hitler took refuge in the pseudo-mystical philosophising which is so congenial to him, and so convenient a way of avoiding awkward questions. At the same time he carefully avoided the complete negative.

In the end the episcopate could only report to Rome that, for the time being, the really difficult situation of the Church in Germany had remained unaltered. For their own public they reported that it was hoped that a new cultural understanding might be reached, but that at this first general interview it had not been possible to go into questions of detail.

It was clear that no further *démarche* on the part of the Vatican was advisable. The German Bishops were left free to do what they could. Thus the projected visit of Cardinal Pacelli was abandoned. The Bishops of Cologne and Paderborn and the Cardinal Archbishop of Breslau issued a letter in which they recalled the numerous appeals that had been made to the authorities. "We put this question to all who exercise influence in the Fatherland—Will this state of affairs continue? Will our afflicted German people be spared the rest and the worst? After all the sufferings of the last twenty years, are they now going to oppress the soul? Is our people to be torn in such a manner that one part will honour Jesus Christ, our Lord, while the other will scorn Christ and persecute the faithful?" They pledged themselves to uphold the Faith, and expressed their confidence in the power of the faithful to do the same. The Bishops of Freiburg, Mainz and Rottenburg afterwards adopted this Pastoral as their own.

Again an echo came from over the border. Bishop Gfoellner of Linz used the occasion of the 800th anniversary of S. Leopold, the Patron Saint of Austria, to make some pointed remarks about true and false anti-Bolshevism, and they were not all aimed in one direction. Only when the higher ranks of society had proved themselves to be thorough

and true Christians, would it be possible to speak of Austria as a Christian corporate State. The progress of Bolshevik ideas was intelligible if, on the one hand, were hunger, poverty and distress, and, on the other, capitalist luxury and the sabotage of the social measures of a Christian government. "This ever-growing danger of Bolshevism cannot be completely uprooted by a mere political anti-Bolshevism, which powerful national leaders had inscribed on their banners, nor by a military anti-Bolshevism, but in the first place by a religious anti-Bolshevism which opposes to the Satanic godlessness of the Russian Bolsheviks the holy idea of God and the victorious power of God, which announces and spreads the Kingdom of Christ, and, in so doing, erects Catholicism and the Church as the bulwarks of protection."

Before the year was out, Cardinal Faulhaber had another interview with Hitler, and this time Cardinal Schulte was with him. What transpired is not known. But an appointment that was made shortly afterwards did not suggest any willingness to call off the *Kulturkampf*. The Bavarian Ministry of Education and Culture having fallen vacant, owing to the death of a radical Nazi, Herr Schemm, his place was filled by Herr Wagner, the Bavarian Minister of the Interior, who had already distinguished himself for his sympathy with Pagan ideas and for repression of the Church.

A Popular Revolt

While the Bishops and Chancellor were discussing, local governors were acting, and in a way that laid bare the forces that were at work under the surface. On November 4th, 1936, the Minister for Church and Schools in Oldenburg issued a decree laying down that in future public school buildings might no longer be blessed by the Church. All pictures of Luther and crucifixes were to be removed from all State buildings, including the schools, on the ground that these buildings are the common property of the State and must not therefore serve one religion in particular.

The ministry seemed to have overlooked the fact that

the southern part of Oldenburg—the Münster land—is one of the most earnestly Catholic parts of Germany. The order to remove the crucifix from public buildings was a gesture that the simplest peasant could understand. It was a sign, and a deliberate sign, that Germany was no longer to be regarded as a Christian land. Christianity was to be relegated to the rank of the merely tolerated. On November 15th, Bishop von Galen, who is not one to take lightly an attack of this kind, sounded the alarm and ordered nine days of prayer for the retention of the crucifix throughout the diocese. The response was impressive. The churches were crowded. From village after village protests poured in to the Ministry of Oldenburg. Mayors and parish councillors threatened to resign. The shaken Minister proposed a compromise. The crucifix should be displayed during the hours of religious teaching. The Catholic people rejected the compromise.

The excitement grew to such an extent that Herr Röver, the Governor and National Socialist *Gauleiter* of Oldenburg arranged a great meeting to which all members of the National Socialist party were summoned. It was intended, doubtless, to be a great demonstration of the power of the Nazi party. But, unfortunately for the Governor's calculations, 4,000 Catholics from the Münsterland put in an appearance. Herr Röver made a characteristic Nazi speech in which he descanted on the well-worn theme of *Volks-gemeinschaft* (Community of the People). But that was not what they came to hear. A steady stream of interruption was kept up of "The Crucifix, the Crucifix! Keep to the subject!" until the Governor had to give way. He said it was a characteristic of the National Socialist regime to put right mistakes it had made. The decree would be rescinded and the crucifixes would remain in the schools. It was a great popular victory.

Bishop von Galen did not fail to point the moral in a letter to his people. He praised their manly Christian courage. But he begged them to observe the significance of what had happened. It was the first fateful step on the path

indicated by Rosenberg, which, according to the well-known words of the Reichs Youth Leader (Baldur von Schirach) is to be the way of German Youth. Alfred Rosenberg's book—condemned by the Church—was still being forced on those taking part in the Führer-training courses and the training camps as indispensable to a full understanding of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*. In that book—the *Myth of the Twentieth Century*—it was expressly demanded that representations of the Crucified Christ such as are found in churches and village streets should be replaced by other symbols. He even declared on page 616 that a German Church would emerge, and that in the churches which were handed over to it the place of the Crucifix would be taken by the Master Spirit of Fire, the Hero in the highest sense of the word. Out of sight, out of mind. That was the idea. But they would always be ready to defend the most precious inheritance of their fathers, faith in Christ and His holy Cross.

Oldenburg was by no means the only district in which attempts were made to get rid of the Crucifix. But it was the most spectacular, and the news of the Münsterlanders' resistance reverberated over Germany, despite the fact that nothing appeared in the papers.

CHAPTER X

CLOSING IN ON THE CHURCH

We are willing to cast God out of our Church. But we will not lose the Church. Not our Church. Not the German National Church.

BERGMANN

The Search for a Modus Vivendi

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS had recognised during 1936 that something more than the relations between the Church and the State were involved. It had become plain that the National Socialist philosophy was becoming increasingly a vital interest of the regime. The "New Heathenism" was now part of the policy of the governing elements. It was all the more necessary for the Church to establish a *modus vivendi*. At the beginning of 1937 they published a Pastoral Letter which endeavoured to do this. In order to avoid rousing prejudice they said nothing about the necessity for the Church fighting on two fronts against Communism and National Socialism. The Pope had already linked them together, as had Catholic Bishops in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and also the German Bishops themselves; and nothing had done more—just because there was so much truth in the parallel—to annoy leading Nazis. Once more they tried to follow the line that National Socialism and Catholicism could work together. Though they disappointed some of their more clear-sighted followers by doing so, they had to bear in mind the deep effect of ceaseless Nazi propaganda even in convinced Catholic circles. Both from the point of view of the Government, and from that of this section of their own followers, it was vital to avoid the charge of being unpatriotic.

Rumours of the complete suppression of all religious teaching reached them, and also of still more vigorous action against the Catholic Youth Association. The pastoral letter in consequence concentrated on the school. They were now faced with a new situation. Formerly there had been besides the Confessional school what was known as the *Simultanschule*, in which Catholics and Protestants were educated together, but were separated for religious teaching. Now a new kind of school, the Community school, was to be introduced, in which there would be no guarantee of religious teaching. "In the projected Community school," said the Bishops, "we can find not only not the slightest trace of a Christian faith, but, on the contrary, there is unimpeachable evidence that these schools will be an effective means of suffocating the Catholic Faith and Christianity in the hearts of the coming generation. Whoever did not do his Christian duty in defending the school or promoting the Community school either does not know the final aim of our opponents, or bows in unchristian and un-German weakness before temporal motives or before coercion." This was a reference to the fact that State officials were forbidden—even if they were Catholics—either to speak in defence of the Confessional schools or to send their children to them.

By way of proving how justifiable were the Bishops' fears—and preparing the way for the Community school—the Reichs Chief of School Teachers, Gauleiter Waechter, chose this moment to issue a decree that all teachers must now come to a decision. Double membership of the Nazi Teachers' Union and of Catholic Unions would no longer be permitted. It will be remembered that, at the beginning of the Third Reich, the Teachers' Unions had been dissolved as professional organisations. But they had continued—especially the Union of Catholic Women Teachers—as Church and religious societies. Now this would no longer be permitted.

The increasing pressure was revealed in the case of Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg. He was one of the Bishops, it will be remembered, who had been most anxious to support the

Third Reich so far as possible. He had, for example, gone out of his way to defend its foreign policy. That did not save him from the most shameless abuse, heaped, quite unjustifiably, on his personal character by Streicher in *Der Stürmer*. He now made a public appeal for the confidence of his people who had known him for forty years. "If it be thought that by exercising such a pressure on me, I may be bought or influenced in the fulfilment of my episcopal duties, a mistake is being made. I shall continue to carry out my duties as a Catholic Bishop, come what may!" The Archbishop wrote a strong pastoral letter in which he said quite plainly that Christianity was at stake. "Was the Catholic Church to be branded as Public Enemy No. 2, and as a confederate of Bolshevism, despite the willingness of its German followers (conditioned by faith and duty) to serve the New Reich in loyalty and sacrifice even unto the utmost limits? Were the enemies of Christianity to be allowed to spread their inflammatory propaganda unhindered, while the Bishops—despite the Concordat—were refused the right even to address their flock through their diocesan gazettes?" This very letter was seized by the authorities before it was published—all ecclesiastical journals had to be submitted to the Censor beforehand. The Freiburg *Diocesan Gazette* ceased publication, as it was impossible to print in it anything worth while. The schools in Bavaria had now gone. By terrific pressure a great Catholic majority of parents had been turned into a minority of 4%, so far as choice of Confessional school was concerned.

The consequences of the Community school quickly became apparent. In Regensburg children were forbidden to make the sign of the Cross; here and there the Crucifix was removed from the school—and it was found more difficult to get it back than it had been in Oldenburg. To take but one example. At Frankenthal in the Saarland the Crucifix was removed from the wall of a school, and Hitler's portrait substituted for it. Frankenthal is in the mining district, and the parents of the children, who are mostly miners, made demonstrations outside the school

and the Town hall. The only result was that they lost their jobs. Hitler's portrait remained; the Crucifix did not return. Teachers were forced to attend meetings where Christian belief was attacked.

Dr. Ley, in an address at the Berlin Sport Palace to German Youth, revealed quite clearly the aims behind the Common school. "The education of the German people belongs to the Party alone, and the education of youth belongs to the Hitler Youth alone. . . . On this earth we believe in Adolf Hitler alone. We believe that National Socialism is the only faith that makes for the happiness of our people. We believe that there is a God in Heaven who created us, who leads and guides and visibly blesses us, and we believe that this God sent us Adolf Hitler, so that Germany might have a foundation for its existence for all time to come. Adolf Hitler—*Sieg Heil!*"

It is not surprising that, in these circumstances, the distracted Bishops began to feel that the attempt to arrive at a *modus vivendi* was merely self-deception. Cardinal Bertram and Cardinal Schulte had an interview with Hitler; but the results were quite negative. The time had arrived for a united appeal to the Pope.

The Bishops Appeal to Rome

The Bishops were in close touch with Rome now. A strong delegation consisting of the three Cardinals of Breslau, Cologne, and Munich, Graf von Galen, Bishop of Münster, and Graf von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin, interviewed the Pope himself. After their visit the Bishops began to take concurrent action to warn their flock of the dangers ahead. Cardinal Faulhaber sounded the alarm in a sermon at S. Michael's Church, Munich, on the anniversary of the Pope's Coronation before an audience of 7,000 people. His theme was that it was now said that the Concordat was out of date. He reminded his hearers that the Concordat owed its origin to the initiative of Herr Hitler himself. Catholics must all the same adhere to a treaty,

which was solemnly signed as an instrument of honest collaboration. The priests, said the Cardinal, were not afraid of starvation if State subsidies came to an end. But the State would find that a large part of its work of reconstruction during the last few years would break down, because worldly authority would be undermined when spiritual authority was disparaged. Confidence in the German Government would suffer a severe shock in the eyes of the world, if the Concordat were dropped. Cardinal Faulhaber drove home through cheering crowds, with which the police did not dare to interfere.

On the same day Graf von Preysing preached a sermon in his cathedral of S. Hedwig, in Berlin, setting forth the violations of the Concordat. Graf von Preysing's action gave the Nazi leaders a shock. For several reasons. The celebration of the Pope's Coronation was a great official occasion. Representatives of the diplomatic corps were present. Thus the Bishop's sermon was addressed to the outside world as well as to the Catholics of Berlin. Moreover, up till then, the Bishop had been regarded as a moderating influence. Graf von Preysing is a remarkable man. He comes of an old Bavarian aristocratic family, and had been in the diplomatic service before he took Orders. His work as a diplomatist took him to Rome before the War. While there he made friends with Monsignore Pacelli. The friendship continued during the War, and became important when Benedict XV made gallant efforts to promote peace. When the War was over von Preysing was ordained and within a comparatively short time became Bishop of the lovely little Bavarian town of Eichstätt, which was in his own homeland. When Bishop Bares died, in 1935, von Preysing, to his great surprise, found himself translated to the see of Berlin. His position in the capital of Germany has given him a leadership which he has used with courage and statesmanship. His whole training pre-disposed him to the discovery, if possible, of a *modus vivendi*. But he is a man of clear vision, shrewd and humorous. Once his mind was made up

concerning the real nature of the forces at work, he spoke out plainly and with great effect.

The warnings about infringements of the Concordat were conveyed to Hitler himself by Cardinal Bertram and Cardinal Schulte. Significantly Faulhaber, von Preysing and von Galen were not allowed into the Presence. Though Hitler lectured the Cardinals for some two hours he reserved his answer.

The Bishops did not, however, wait any longer for it. At the beginning of Lent, one after the other, they lifted up their voices. The Archbishop of Bamberg directed his Lenten pastoral to drawing a distinction between true and false Christianity. Cardinal Schulte spoke of the sinister forces, which were never tired of letting loose their hatred of everything Christian and Divine. Dr. Sproll of Rottenburg said, "You know how far hatred of Christ has spread in Germany, and that anti-Christianity is advancing. They hate the religion of the Cross, because they are trying to root out the Church of the Crucified in Germany also." Dr. Buchberger of Regensburg reminded his people of the holy duty of confessing their faith openly. The Prelates did not hesitate to compare the Nazi attitude with that of Bolshevism. This was the unkindest cut of all.

The official Information Bureau tried to counter this attack by saying that the Bishops had nothing to do with the Concordat, because it was a political treaty between the Reich and the Vatican. Monsignore Orsenigo, the Papal Nuncio, quickly disposed of this argument by joining his protest to that of the Bishops.

The Pope Speaks

Then at last—to shew that there was no difference between the Bishops and the Vatican—the Pope himself spoke. When he did so, it was with shattering force. Pius XI was at last completely alive to the fact that the Church had to fight on more than one front, and that Bolshevism was not the only enemy. The method he adopted was

unprecedented, and completely took the German Government by surprise. As it was of the first importance that his words should reach the Catholic population, it would have been useless to publish an Encyclical in Rome in the ordinary way. The only result would have been that it would have been stopped at the frontier. In order to avoid this the Encyclical was written in German, was smuggled into Germany, and then appeared in German in the *Osservatore Romano* before it appeared in Italian. It was manifolded in every diocese. During the night of March 18th energetic young clerics on motor bicycles sped over the countryside with hundreds of copies, distributing them to the Rural Deans, who saw to it that each of the parish priests within their jurisdiction secured a copy on Saturday. On Palm Sunday morning, the day in which the minds of all Christians begin to turn to the contemplation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, the Pope's Encyclical "*Mit brennender Sorge*" (with burning anxiety) was read from all the Catholic pulpits of Germany. The effect was widespread, profound and startling.

The Pope described how he had tried to make peace by agreeing to the Concordat. But the experiences of the last years had fixed responsibilities and laid bare intrigues which from the outset only aimed at a war of extermination. He was bound to oppose a policy which tried to strangle rights guaranteed by a treaty. He went on to deal with particular dangers. The exaltation of race or the people, or the State or a particular form of State to an idolatrous level perverts the Divine order of the world. To attempt to banish the Old Testament from church and school was to run counter to God's design. The climax of this design is Christ. It is final and permanent and admits of no substitute drawn from the so-called myth of blood and race. Any attempt to place a mortal man beside Christ would deserve to be called a prophet of nothingness. The Church rejoices in the gifts of different nations. But over them all stands the Church one and indivisible. The Pope spoke sternly to those who had failed to live up to their Christian

profession, but he urged those who condemned the whole Church because of the failure of the few to apply the same standards to organisations in which they happened to be interested. His whole heart, said the Pope, went out to those who were suffering from intimidation. "Faith in the Church cannot stand pure and true without the support of Faith in the primacy of the Bishop of Rome." The idea of a national German Church is a seduction. "The live history of other national churches, with their paralysis, their domestication and subjection to worldly powers, is sufficient evidence of the sterility to which is condemned every branch that is severed from the truth of the living Church." His Holiness seems to have overlooked the German Evangelical Church, which was anything but sterile, when he used words so different in temper from that of the German Catholic Bishops. Perhaps such oversights are inseparable from infallibility. The Pope then proceeded to a masterly statement of the fundamental differences between Christian theology, and the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, which will be found in full in the appendix, together with his appeal to Youth. He concluded his letter with words of encouragement. He was confident that if the faithful were generous in suffering the day would come when the Te Deum of liberation would again be sung "as the German people returns to religion, bends the knee before Christ, arming themselves against the enemies of God, and resuming the task God has laid upon them".

What gave the letter so sharp a point was its clear statement that the present rulers of Germany were not merely difficult or antagonistic to the Church, but were set on a course designed to uproot Christianity.

Treason Trials

The Papal Encyclical called for an answer. The attack on the Church must be more vigorous. The Propaganda Ministry was determined that nothing should be omitted that could injure the prestige of the Church in the eyes of

the man in the street. The smuggling trials and the immorality trials had not accomplished all that was hoped of them. Now a new line was struck out. It was not enough to depict priests as shift and immoral. It must be proved that they were a danger to the State. So began the series of treason trials. The first to be begun was that of a Father Rossaint. He was a zealous worker among the poor in the Ruhr district. Amongst the Ruhr workers there are many Communists. Father Rossaint did not confine himself to the faithful, but was an active missionary. He mixed with the Communists, understood their problems, and sympathised with their needs. He agreed with them when their views were congenial to the Christian outlook, and tried to lead them to a doctrine of brotherhood and social development based on Christian teaching. He was specially active as a worker for peace, and took a prominent part in the Peace League of German Catholics, which had the blessing both of the Pope and of German episcopate. That, from the Nazi point of view,—which is fundamentally a glorification of war—was bad enough. But what was worse, he had been known to say that he believed that National Socialism led to Bolshevism. For these things Father Rossaint was accused of treason. It is a charge difficult to rebut, because it is against the law for the accused to defend theses like these even in court. Moreover, he was tried, not before a regular Court of Justice, but before a People's Court. According to the Vienna *Reichspost* the President of the Court behaved in the partial manner that is customary in courts, where the only criterion of right and wrong is the welfare of the Nazi Party.

The next "treason" trial occurred in Berlin. A Franciscan lay brother, Ludwig Pfannmüller (whose name in religion was Brother Donatus), of Fulda, was accused of betraying his country because he had written to a friend in America—his letters had been seized by the Secret Police—describing the persecution of the Church and also the economic conditions. "We are beginning to go short of everything," he wrote, "as nothing can be bought from abroad on account of lack of money. Clothing and similar articles have

to be made out of substitutes. Wool is made out of wood." This was quite enough to condemn him in the eyes of the People's Court before which he came, because in their eyes Germany is living under war conditions already, and information given to "the enemy" is treachery.

Immorality Again

Many more such trials were threatened. But the first efforts had a bad effect on popular opinion. So a different campaign was opened. The immorality trials were started again. Many of the accused had been in prison for nearly a year. The German public were now promised that there would be a thousand proceedings against priests!

Graf von Preysing, the Bishop of Berlin, devoted his Whitsuntide pastoral to a defence of the clergy. Only a few of the cases before the courts were, he said, concerned with priests and monks. "There are about 25,000 priests in Germany. If 25 of them are now to stand trial—I am unaware of the actual number—it is one in a thousand. There are 90,000 members of Religious Orders in Germany. And if 900 of them were to be placed on trial—and the charge by no means proves their guilt—that means one in every hundred." The Bishop was justified in questioning whether accusation necessarily implied guilt. The week after his pastoral appeared two priests were tried and acquitted—a tribute to the fact that some judges in Germany still, in spite of frightful pressure, do their best to uphold the principles of justice.

On May 28th Goebbels renewed the attack. Addressing a large political audience in Berlin he derided the idea that immorality was an exceptional matter, where priests and monks are concerned. He declared that investigations had disclosed "a general moral collapse such as had scarcely been known in this terrible and revolting degree in the entire history of human civilisation".

The Church authorities then produced the figures. Forty-nine out of the 21,461 secular priests were involved,

of whom twenty-one had been convicted and twenty-eight had not yet been tried. Of the 4,194 regular priests nine had been accused. One had been sentenced and eight cases were pending. The offenders had, for the most part, been punished long before by ecclesiastical courts. When Goebbels attempted to justify the extreme publicity given to these trials by saying that it had not hitherto suggested itself to any other section of the community to conceal such beastliness, he was reminded of the hundreds of arrests that had been made of Party members on similar charges without any public trial at all.

Goebbels' rodomontade roused one of the most popular Roman Catholic priests in Germany to protest. Father Rupert Mayer, a Jesuit, had distinguished himself for his devotion to the National Socialist cause since its earliest days. Before that he had been a chaplain in the War at the front, had been severely wounded, and had been awarded the Iron Cross of the first and second class. Shortly after Goebbels' attack, he preached in S. Michael's Church in Munich on the subject of the immorality trials. The authorities, he said, are always telling us that we live in "a free German country in which a free German is entitled to deliver a free German address". He would do so. The assertions made about the immorality trials were highly doubtful, and the doubts were justified. He quoted the Bishop of Mainz as evidence that this was so. The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had demanded an apology from the German radio for an untrue statement about a Belgian priest. The correction was made—but between six and seven in the morning! When the congregation broke out into loud applause as he appealed to them to bear witness to their confidence in the decency of the priesthood, he begged them to desist. He did not wish for demonstrations, only that the truth should be known. On June 25th he was arrested. On the next Sunday a protest was read out in all the churches of Munich.

On the first Sunday in July, Cardinal Faulhaber, preaching in the same church, praised Father Mayer as priest and

patriot. His arrest was a proof that the *Kulturkampf* had entered on a new stage. Certain circles of the Party were resolved to annihilate the Catholic Church. The flood of calumny and lies could not be refuted in Church papers and parish magazines, because the police would not allow of any answer.

Father Mayer's arrest was quickly followed by that of other Roman Catholic preachers who were accused of insulting the institutions of the Third Reich.

More Financial Pressure

During 1937 the Nazi authorities were not satisfied with mere campaigns of abuse and defamation, nor with the trials of individual priests. The State put on a further financial pressure.

The first move was in Bavaria, a favourite ground for Nazi experiments, which are afterwards extended to the whole Reich,—and it may be added a province in which the Nazis were particularly anxious to weaken the Church. In 1936 the State reduced its payments to the Roman Catholic Church from 3.64 marks per head to 2.80, which meant that the eight Bavarian dioceses lost four million marks. By the process of *Gleichschaltung* the Church had already lost 5,185,000 marks that the Bavarian Government had been accustomed to pay.

The Bavarian Minister of Education and Nazi District Party Leader, Adolf Wagner, had always shewn himself highly inimical to the Church. In July 1937, he made a speech at Fürstenfeldbruch, near Munich, which boded ill. He said "It is with regret that I must state that there is still to-day a disturbing force apparent in the life of our people. This force is the Churches". After this preliminary, Wagner announced that the voluntary grants would be still further reduced. These "voluntary" grants, it should be remembered, are in lieu of property taken away from the Church in former times. They are independent of the Church taxes.

Control of Youth

In the latter part of 1937 renewed attacks were made on the Youth organisations. The Catholic Young Men's Association in the diocese of Münster was dissolved, and its funds confiscated, on the ground that it had indulged in illegal activities, which were thus officially described. "The various organisations affiliated to the Catholic Young Men's Associations have until quite recently, with the permission of their ecclesiastical and secular leaders, organised excursions and rambles—at some of which identical clothing was worn—have indulged in sport and games of various kinds, and have organised and carried on social evenings and similar gatherings in a predominantly secular manner." What this means is that if young Catholics went for a ramble in the country after church or played football in the afternoon, or sang some *Volkslieder* together they were doing something which endangered the safety of the State! The law under which these proceedings were taken was "the Reichspresident's Decree for the Protection of People and State", which was issued by Hindenburg on February 5th, 1933, in order to give Hitler's Government control over the written and the spoken word.

At Dortmund shortly after this a Special Court imposed fines of about £25 on members of Catholic Youth organisations because they had gone out together in small parties for rambles on a Sunday. Similar action was taken in the diocese of Trier, and in the diocese of Limburg, when it was asserted that the Catholic Youth had organised excursions, pitched tents, and played open-air games such as fencing, boxing, shooting, football and so on.

In 1938 the process of dissolving Catholic Young Men's Associations went steadily on. In the early part of the year those of the dioceses of Cologne and Aachen were suppressed. The German Pathfinders of S. George, and the New Germany Youth Leagues went the same way in Camburg, Hildburgshausen, Meiningen, Saalfeld, and Sonneberg.

Catholic work in the schools in the Rhineland was also,

so far as possible, blotted out. The heads of the Advisory Centre for Parochial Work in Düsseldorf were arrested. One after the other Catholic high schools were closed. It was not merely the public or State schools that were affected, but private higher schools also. Catholic parents became increasingly unhappy. They had always been accustomed to send their daughters to Convent schools, where they got a religious atmosphere, and a very good education into the bargain.

One of the most famous Roman Catholic teaching orders is the *Englische Fräulein*—the English Young Ladies, who are so called because they were founded by an Englishwoman. They have various houses in South Germany, and anything between 50 and 100 sisters. In March they were informed that after April they would no longer be allowed to carry on this work.

Where, asked Catholic mothers of good family, am I to send my daughters? There will no longer be any religious schools in Germany, and we cannot afford to send them abroad.

During February, Herr Rust, the Reich Minister for Education, published a memorandum on "Training and Instruction in the Higher Schools". In this he explained (according to the *Völkische Beobachter* of February 12th) that the object of the higher schools was "The education of the German Youth in National Socialism". "The National Socialist educational system is not the product of pedagogic planning but of the political system and its laws. Long before the National Socialist State was able to take over the machinery of public education, a private system of the young had arisen, apart from the school system, in the Hitler Youth, and the political fighting organisations." Behind the Hitler Youth, of course, stand the Black Guards and the storm troops.

What is meant by "political pedagogy" is defined in a special number of the *Völkische Beobachter*. "The new conception of mankind, which is at the base of political pedagogy, is not the humanist conception of the educated

individual, but the political being. In the forefront of political pedagogy are the conceptions, 'type' and 'formative education', which are necessarily related. 'Formative education' is the conception of direct education based upon our own doctrine. 'Direct' here means from man to man, eye to eye. Through direct education one character draws forth another character, the model of the Führer and the comrades calls forth the young energies. . . . Real education raises a claim to rule over young hearts. . . . The new 'type', which imparts content and significance to our entire education, is based, like the 'mythus', on living power and therefore is valid only for those who, because of their birth, belong to this current of power. It is the 'type' which permits us to anticipate specific kinds of conduct and action. This determination of the 'type' and of education generally by activity, by human beings acting within a community, is the foremost and most important feature of political pedagogy."

Where does religion come in? The answer may be guessed from the following words of Herr Rust. "There is no intention of issuing any new scheme of religious instruction. It is merely decreed that all material should be eliminated from that particular subject which might be regarded as injurious to educational unity." In other words, the *Weltanschauung* must take precedence of the Christian Faith.

The following verse will shew what is one of the most important elements in the Nazi educational programme—and one that makes it incompatible with Christianity. It was first printed in January 1936, in "Weapon-bearers of the Nation", which is the organ of the State Leadership of Youth.

With the bells in the tower
Let us arise
And fan the fires,
Which to Heaven shall rise,
And bear our weapons—for the Year is new:
War is the Watchword! Make the watchword true!

This charming carol was repeated in January 1937, and will be each year till it comes true.

CHAPTER XI

AUSTRIA INFELIX

Right is what serves the people; wrong what is detrimental to them.

REICHSMINISTER FRANK

THE SEIZURE OF Austria has a clear connection with the struggle for religious liberty in Germany. The primary motive for the *Anschluss* was, of course, that it was the first and most obvious step in the union of all German-speaking people in Europe under his personal rule, which is the lodestar of Herr Hitler's policy. But the desire to crush German Catholicism undoubtedly played a part. In itself there was much to be said for the *Anschluss*, and, had it not been for the religious persecution in Germany, the union of the two countries would have been desired by a majority in both lands. As it was, the development of Nazi policy after Hitler came into power, repelled the leading opinion in Austria more and more. The truncated Austria that, after the war, was left by the Treaty of S. Germain to get on as best it could, was predominantly Catholic. But, after 1933, though it was *Deutsch-Oesterreich*,—and despite its unfortunate economic position—the desire among Austrians for the *Anschluss* steadily weakened. Power passed into the hands of a section of Austrian society which, because it was determined to preserve its own Catholic culture, was also determined to preserve its independence. In this section of society the Church, headed by the Bishops, played an important part. Its standard-bearer was Engelbert Dollfuss. A man, of the people—like Hitler—he was a patriotic Austrian and a devout Catholic. Unfortunately, the weakness of his country compelled him to look outside for support. And he turned his eyes to Italy, where he got the worst possible advice. Mussolini, more mindful of his Fascist

regime than of the solid interests of Italy, made the destruction of the Socialist power in Vienna the price of his support. By so doing he made inevitable the eventual appearance of Nazi Germany on the Brenner. Dollfuss, by agreeing to destroy the admirable social work done by the Socialists in Vienna, divided the anti-Nazi majority in his country into two halves. The Roman Catholic Church in Austria, by supporting Dollfuss in this act of folly, shewed a short-sightedness that has only too often in modern times made that Church dig its own grave. It would have been at least as possible to make terms with the easy-going people of the Left in Vienna as the Centre Party had found it to be to co-operate with the more rigid Socialism of Germany under the Weimar Republic. As it was, Schuschnigg, who inherited the policy of Dollfuss, found himself fighting on two fronts, against Socialists and against Nazis. Too late he realised his error. When he courageously announced his plebiscite, he welcomed the assistance of the Socialists, and they eagerly responded. Hitler saw that the vote of Austria would certainly go against him. This he dare not face. The blow to his prestige would have been catastrophic, and his dream of a Germany dominant over Europe might have faded for good and all. There was no time to wait. The stroke that had long been prepared, down to the smallest detail, must be delivered. On March 11th Hitler sent an ultimatum to President Miklas, requiring him to appoint Dr. Seyss-Inquart as Chancellor. On March 12th the German troops marched into Austria. It was an act that infringed the elementary rights of a nation as clearly as did the conquest of Manchuria and Abyssinia. But there was little sense of solidarity among the leaders of the rich and powerful nations, whose interests are vitally threatened by so flagrant a substitution of violence for law. They were reduced again, as in the previous cases, to finding excuses for brigandage which would draw a veil over their own inertia. In view of this selfish blindness or cowardice, or whatever it was, that led Hitler to believe he could act thus with impunity, it ill becomes a citizen of one of the Pharisee nations to say

anything critical about the one that fell among thieves. But the facts of what happened to the Churches in Austria must be related.

The attitude of the Catholic Bishops has been indicated earlier in this book by utterances of the Archbishop of Salzburg and the Bishop of Linz. The same attitude was maintained by Cardinal Innitzer, when Chancellor Schuschnigg announced the plebiscite of the Austrian people. Two days after this announcement, that is, on February 26th, Cardinal Innitzer addressed a message to the Catholics of Austria in which he spoke as follows:

"The Austrian Chancellor has . . . spoken really liberating words, which brought joy to every true Austrian. In accordance with these words, we Catholics will strive with complete devotion for our beloved Fatherland, for our people, and for genuine Christian culture; as, in fact, we needs must do, if we follow our sacred duty. No one shall surpass us in loyalty and labour. During the forthcoming Lenten period, we shall pray . . . for God's blessing upon the labours of our leaders and all their helpers. I further desire that a holy Mass be said in all our parishes, if possible each month . . . for the peace and liberty of our Austrian Fatherland."

On the evening of the day when the German army marched in, Cardinal Innitzer issued the following appeal:—"Catholics of the diocese of Vienna are requested on Sunday, the 13th, to pray to God our Lord, to thank Him for the bloodless progress of the great political transformation, and for a happy future for Austria." On March 15th Cardinal Innitzer had an interview with Hitler in the Imperial Hotel. Immediately afterwards he issued the following directions:

"Both priests and faithful will stand unconditionally behind the Great-German State and its Führer; the blessing of Providence must certainly accompany the world-historical struggle against the criminal madness of Bolshevism, and for the security of German life, for the provision of bread and work, for the strength and honour

of the Reich and the unity of the German people. I urge the leaders of the young people's organisations to prepare to join those of the German Reich. 'The Church will have no reason to regret her loyalty to the Greater-German State.' These words of the Führer are a guarantee that the Church will be enabled to pursue her own particular tasks." The Cardinal also (according to *Germania*) bade the clergy abstain from politics, because the natural community of the Nation is called to work out a Divine idea. Three days later some of the Austrian Bishops signed a "Solemn Declaration" "with deepest conviction and of our own free will". It contained these words:

"We joyfully recognise the distinguished achievements, both past and present, of the National Socialist movement in the realm of social and economic construction, as well as its social policy for the German nation and people, and particularly for the poorest sections of the community. We are convinced that, through the efforts of the National Socialist movement, the perils have been averted of all-destroying, atheistic Bolshevism. The Bishops give their blessings to this work in the future and would ask the faithful to follow their example. On the day of the plebiscite it is our obvious national duty, as Bishops, to make known our adherence as Germans to the German Reich, and we expect all believing Christians to realise what they owe to their own people." The Declaration was sent the same day to District Leader Bürckel for his approval. With it Cardinal Innitzer sent a letter, to which he added in his own writing "*Heil Hitler!*"

When that approval had been obtained, Cardinal Innitzer and Prince Archbishop Waitz of Salzburg wrote a preface to it as follows:—"In the light of the great historical epoch, through which the Austrian people is passing, and in the knowledge that in these days the thousand-year-old longing of our people for unity in one great nation of Germans is being fulfilled, we Bishops of Austria, after thorough discussion, have decided to address the following directives to all the faithful. We can do so

all the more freely as District Leader Bürckel, who is in charge of the plebiscite in Austria, has assured us of the sincerity of his policy, the motto of which is 'Unto God, what belongs to God, and unto Cæsar, what belongs to Cæsar'."

The Preface and the Declaration were then sent to the clergy to be read out in all the pulpits of Austria on March 27th. But with them was also sent the following note:—"In order to avoid any misunderstanding of the contents of the declaration which is going to be read out on Sunday, it must be emphasised that this takes place under the full assurance that the rights of God and the Church will be maintained."

What does all this mean? First, it is important to notice that the Bishops' Declaration with its Preface and Cardinal Innitzer's "*Heil Hitler*" letter were displayed prominently throughout the German Press on the following Monday. Nothing was said about the accompanying letter. This was a *coup* indeed! It is not surprising that these announcements were greeted with joy by Rosenberg in a speech about the plebiscite in the strongly Catholic city of Trier. He seized especially on the compliments paid to the social and economic work of National Socialism and on the salvation from Bolshevism. "We rejoice," he said, "in this outbreak of truth and this recognition in an historical hour, and we stretch out our hands to everyone who, without 'ifs' and 'ands', confesses his adhesion to Germany." He was delighted to think that the Cardinal saw *no difficulties at all* in the German laws of life. The National Socialist Movement was big enough to give room for many Confessions under its dome.

District Leader Bürckel, it may be said in passing, was the Commissioner who was employed—after the plebiscite in the Saar—to deprive the Catholic Saarlanders of the rights that they had been promised before the plebiscite.

The next thing to notice is the difference of tone between the Cardinal's directions, which were issued on his sole initiative, and the declaration signed by the other Bishops.

The Bishops speak merely of the social and political achievements of National Socialism, the Cardinal asks his flock to thank God for National Socialism, and in doing so comes very near the "German Christian" point of view; moreover he handed over the Catholic Youth to the *Hitler Jugend*, lock, stock, and barrel. In both these points Innitzer's attitude was poles apart from that of the German Bishops of the Reich, who knew what Hitlerism meant. Though they ordered the bells to be rung for the plebiscite, they issued no directions.

What, meanwhile, was the attitude of the Vatican towards this astonishing *volte face* by the leaders of a part of the Roman Catholic Church particularly dear to the Holy Father? The first step was the publication by the *Osservatore Romano* on March 30th of the note which the Cardinal sent to the Bishops with the "Declaration". A second letter from Cardinal Innitzer to Bürckel was written on March 31st. One sentence in this letter—in the light of subsequent events—seems due to Vatican initiative. The Cardinal said that the declaration was spontaneous and "a testimony springing solely from the voice of our common German blood". But not so the sentence that followed:—"I should like to express to you in this connection quite openly my inmost wish these historical days, namely, that with the Bishops' declaration we have arrived at a turning-point in the religious and cultural life of our united people which will usher in a period of deep reconciliation and pacification between Church, State and Party."

The next day, April 1st, the Vatican made its position perfectly clear when the *Osservatore Romano* published an official statement that the Austrian Bishops' declaration had been issued without the agreement of the Holy See, and indeed without any previous consultation with Rome, and was therefore issued upon the sole responsibility of the Austrian Bishops. This statement did not appear in the German papers.

That same evening a Jesuit Father made a broadcast in German from the Vatican station, in which he rejected

the charge of "political Catholicism". "But," he said, "there is a false political Catholicism, an attitude adopted by Catholics—whether of simple believers or of holders of high positions—which consists solely of over-clever caution and tactics, or of a weak accommodation to existing or anticipated facts. . . . The harm is greatest when even the appointed guardians of God's order are possessed by the spirit of this false political Catholicism, and intimidated by the influence of the powerful and successful of the moment. Then it ensues that these Bishops fail in their duty to recognise the wolf in sheep's clothing, and that they put faith in the promises of people against whom they should have been warned by experience, and even by words of His Holiness himself. The result of this attitude is that such guardians of the Church's interests are responsible for deplorable encroachments of the religious and moral into the exclusively political domain. . . . This false political Catholicism is all the more objectionable when the pastors join with those who are for the time being the victors, while simple believers of all classes are suffering because they courageously stand for the principles of the divine order, and particularly for natural human rights. All upright people—far beyond the limits of the Church—will see in such an attitude only disloyalty and ignominy."

It was subsequently explained by the Vatican that the broadcast had no official character and was not inspired. But it could hardly have been delivered from the Vatican station if it had been unwelcome to the Pope.

It was evidently time for Cardinal Innitzer to go to Rome. This he did on April 5th,—entirely on his own initiative, as it was explained.

After interviews with Cardinal Pacelli and the Pope himself, Cardinal Innitzer published the following statement in the *Osservatore Romano in German*.

"1. The solemn declaration of the Austrian Bishops of March 18th was obviously not intended to express approval of anything which is incompatible with the laws of God

and with the freedom and rights of the Catholic Church. Nor should State and Party understand this declaration as binding in conscience upon the faithful, and thus make use of it in propaganda. 2. For the future, the Austrian Bishops demand the following: (a) No alteration in any matter covered by the Austrian Concordat without previous discussion with the Holy See; (b) that the control of the schools and educational system, the guidance of youth, the natural rights of parents and the religious and moral training of the Catholic youth, be guaranteed in accordance with the principles of Catholic belief; also, the prevention of propaganda inimical to religion and the Church; and the right of Catholics to declare, defend and exemplify Catholic faith and Christian principles in relation to all aspects of human life, by all means which modern culture affords. SIGNED: Th. Cardinal Innitzer, and in the name of the entire Austrian Episcopate."

What is the explanation? No doubt several factors have to be considered. Cardinal Innitzer had on one side of him, no doubt, Pan-German sympathies. He was a *Sudeten Deutsch* by origin, and therefore, like Hitler himself, peculiarly liable to this specially Austrian-German complex, which was largely the outcome of an attempt to preserve the domination of the German-speaking Austrians over the Slavonic members of the old Empire. Readers of *Mein Kampf* will remember Hitler's hatred for the Archduke Franz Ferdinand just because he sympathised with the Slavs, and saw that they must be given larger opportunities if the Hapsburg Empire was to continue. Moreover, the Cardinal had evidently received assurances from Hitler.

But is it unkind to suppose that there was another factor? It is difficult to realise in England how terrifying to the Viennese, naturally a temperamental people, was the German avalanche. In the first place even before the military arrived, swarms of the dreaded Gestapo came over the border, bringing with them the dossiers of hundreds of people marked down for destruction, and

their presence was quickly felt in Vienna. The suicides—often unaccountably wounded in the back—soon began.

The proved ruthlessness of the Nazis was enough to upset anybody's nerves. And they were everywhere—in the streets and in the sky. An English friend of mine who was one of the last to get out of Vienna told me that it was incredible what an effect was produced on the nerves by the continual zoom of the aeroplanes flying low over the city, round and round and round. After a few hours of that anybody might be ready to make the Hitler salute with both hands!

The Protestant Church in Austria welcomed the *Anschluss* and the arrival of Hitler with whole-hearted enthusiasm. They had long memories of oppression. In the sixteenth century the reformed doctrines swept over Upper Austria, Salzburg, Carinthia, and Styria, like a hurricane. They were rolled back by force, and by force the Counter-Reformation was maintained. In the Corporative State of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, the Protestants were made to feel that they were only tolerated. The oppression that they knew made the Protestants turn a blind eye to the oppression that their fellow-believers over the border were suffering—and their acute sense of Germanism came in to assist the process. They were but a small minority. There are only 123 Evangelical parishes in Austria, with 194 pastors; whereas the Catholic parishes number 2,674, with 4,841 parish priests, and 2,453 priests belonging to the religious orders. As a result of the *Anschluss* the Roman Catholics of Greater Germany have become 27 millions in number, the Protestants being 41 million. In other words, the proportion of Catholic to Protestant has increased from one-third to two-fifths of the total population.

The standpoint of the Evangelical Church in Austria is set forth in the greeting address to Hitler by representatives of the Austrian Evangelical Church on April 9th, 1938.

"My leader! The Evangelical Church in Austria is happy to be allowed to bring you, through her highest leaders the solemn promise of loyalty.

"Our evangelical Church in Austria is small and weak. That is the result of her sad history, written in blood and tears. But it is just this history, which has bound her inseparably to the People, more almost than in any other evangelical established Church. She did not only belong to her followers,—a high percentage of her pastors and the faithful were most severely punished—but she was able at that time to be a helper and comforter to that other part of the People, which did not belong to her confession. Because the Church is thus bound up with the People, our joy over the return of Austria into the Reich is unlimited. But this joy is for us so much deeper and more real, as we have seen in the political events of the last week the favourable hearing of the prayers of our Church, and the result of the great sacrifices of our people, through the Almighty.

"In this way the evangelical Church of Austria greets you, my leader, on the occasion of your act of liberation as the tool in the hand of the Almighty, and in so doing it is not only our blood which speaks, but also the most sacred conviction of our faith, when we bring you, in the name of the evangelical Church, the promise of ever-ready loyalty to your work."

On April 4th Superintendent Dr. Eder issued a statement to the Evangelical Press Service which shewed that there were difficulties. It was apparently designed to suppress any incipient sympathy with the Confessional Church. Having described how all the youth work of the Evangelical Church would be incorporated in the *Hitler Jugend* and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, he went on "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be preached clearly and unequivocally. All fruitless polemic against Church groups or a struggle about *Weltanschauung* is to be avoided. It is not only fruitless, but also tends to lead the Church on to a false track. Our preaching must be a clear ministry of witness, because otherwise we may find ourselves in an undesirable dependence. . . . Our positive attitude to Reich, People and Führer is not conditioned simply by

our blood and race, but by the deep recognition of the fact that in all that has happened God has intervened to the benefit of our people and that the Führer was the fulfiller of the Divine Will for the Salvation of our people. We must thank the Eternal God for what He has done for us. Our ministry must be the service of the Church, the preaching of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. We must guard against conduct by which the service of the Church may be submerged in politics. The Party does not wish that. The Political Leadership emphatically recognises that it will succeed in the whole national fulfilment—it will remain Church. Everybody should know of us, that we stand as members of our people right in the community of the people (*Volksgemeinschaft*) that we, as ministers of the Lord of the Church, have delivered His message."

A better statement of that "neutrality" which is really subservience could not have been made.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY

Protestantism is but a mutilated form of Jewish-Roman Christianity.

ARTUR DINTER:

197 *Theses for the Completion of the Reformation*, p. 36

THE IMPORTANCE OF the Church's struggle for freedom in Germany was quickly grasped in England, in Switzerland, in Scandinavia, and in the United States. Leading German Churchmen had come into personal contact with the leaders of other Churches owing to the growth of a Christian internationalism after the war. What had become known as the "Oecumenical Movement" had gathered together theologians and other representative men from all the Churches of Europe and America—except the Roman Catholic Church—in two conferences, the first at Stockholm in 1925, which dealt with the application of Christianity to life, and the second at Lausanne in 1927, which was concerned with the theological problems involved in faith and order.

It was of the greatest value to the Evangelical Church in Germany that this sense of solidarity had been created. Though it lacked the firmly integrated ecclesiastical internationalism of Rome, it meant that it had friends and sympathisers in the Churches of other lands. A Christian comity across the frontiers existed for the non-Roman Churches.

From the first representatives of these other Churches went to Germany to see for themselves what was happening. It was in this way that I found myself flying to Berlin on July 1st, 1933. During the days that followed I was brought into contact with many of the leading personalities on both sides.

The presence of these visitors came somewhat as a surprise to the leaders of the Nazi Party. They had not reckoned with outside interest of this kind, where the Evangelical Church was concerned. But, on the whole, quite a friendly attitude was adopted so far as English and American visitors were concerned. It is part of the Nazi policy to be friendly with England—if only to detach that country from France. The case was not quite the same with Archbishop Eidem of Upsala, when he had an interview with Hitler at a later stage. He was much the most important of these visitors because he was the spiritual head of a Lutheran National Church. But perhaps for this reason his reception was less gracious.

The body that has acted as the focus for foreign sympathy with Evangelicals in their struggle for freedom bore the somewhat grandiloquent title of "The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work". It did, in fact, represent all the Churches, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinist, that had worked together at Stockholm, and it could quite fairly claim to be the most generally representative body for all Christian opinion (outside the Roman Catholics) on practical Christianity. The Bishop of Chichester was its very able chairman. Its main work was to prepare for another conference similar to that of Stockholm, to be held in 1937. In the course of this work the Council met at Fanö in Denmark. One question that could not be kept out from this conference was the plight of the German Evangelical Church, because it was felt that the pressure of the State on the Church was a growing danger for all Churches, and therefore pre-eminently the concern of a body that was endeavouring to promote Christian comity. The Reichsbishop was represented by Bishop Heckel, who was—and is—head of the Foreign Affairs office of the German Evangelical Church. No representative of the Confessional Church was officially there, though some members were present. After Bishop Heckel had been given a full opportunity to state his case, and had received a courteous hearing the Council felt impelled to express

their sympathy with the Confessional Church. This it did by electing President Koch, the leader of that Church, a member of the Council, and by passing the following resolution:—

“The Council desires to assure its brethren in the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church of its prayers and heartfelt sympathy in their witness to the principles of the Gospel, and of its resolve to maintain close fellowship with them.”

The Council passed this resolution by a large majority. The German delegation voted against it, and followed up their vote by an official protest, though even that protest acknowledged that the resolution was the fruit of a brotherly spirit and of an effort to consolidate the bonds between the German Church and the Oecumenical Movement.

In the event the seriousness of the German conflict determined the Universal Christian Council to concentrate its attention on the relations between Church, Community and State. This became the theme of the Conference for which they were preparing, and which it was proposed to hold at Oxford. The mere discussion of this topic in the circumstances had a wholesome effect on the whole movement for Christian solidarity. Brought out of the academic sphere into the hard world of reality, the promoters got together groups of men in different Churches prepared to do some hard thinking about the meaning of the Christian community, and to discover whether there existed a Church in the Churches. A task more searching than that of Stockholm called urgently. It was no longer a question of applying Christian principles to particular ethical problems. The times called for a common concern for the better understanding of Christianity and a recognition that all who confess the faith of Christ have a responsibility for one another. The attack on the German Churches had quickened the corporate sense of Christians all the world over.

Since the aim of the Oxford Conference and the atmosphere in which it met were of this kind, it was almost

inevitable that some expression of opinion about the trials of the German Church should be given. What made it quite inevitable was the refusal of Hitler to allow the great Evangelical Church, the standard bearer of Lutheranism and the mother of a long succession of theologians, to send anyone to speak in its name at Oxford. A very representative delegation, consisting of members of the Confessional Church, of the Lutheran Council, and also Bishop Heckel, had been arranged. At the last moment their passports were withdrawn. It was impossible to overlook the gap made by their absence, more especially as representatives of two small religious bodies, the Old Catholics and the Methodists, were allowed to be present.

Considerable interest was taken in the Oxford Conference in Germany before it took place. An article by Matthes Ziegler in the *National Sozialistische Monatsheft* for June regarded it with suspicion as being under the influence of Anglo-American Christianity and infected with a League of Nations ideology and a liberal attitude towards the Jewish question. The tests of the Oxford—and of the Edinburgh—Conference would be their capacity to repeat Luther's protest against the "Romish priestly dictatorship" and its understanding of the race question. It might by re-examining the race question contribute to a discovery of the real basis of the Church. Luther's protest, said Ziegler, was the great Germanic confession of freedom of conscience. "National Socialism to-day keeps watch for the freedom of the Germanic spirit. World Protestantism has no need to constitute itself the defender of Wittenberg. Wittenberg is being defended still to-day in Berlin. World Protestantism in shackles to Western Liberalism must shew whether it is capable and willing to carry on further the inheritance of Wittenberg—or not!"

The Nazis have never been quite sure what to do about Luther. In the same issue the writer of another article dismisses Luther as a humanist, who at the same time was too dependent on Rome!

Another paper, *Wille und Macht*, denounced the Conference thus. "'Protestantism', that growing world power, desires to create of 'German' Protestantism a disruptive force within Germany and to foster a centre of rebellion by which the National Socialist attitude towards life would be shattered."

The Message framed by the Oxford Conference to send to their brethren in the Evangelical Church in Germany certainly justified the forebodings of the Nazis. The Message was the high water mark of the conference, putting into dignified and earnest words just that spirit of fellowship in Christ alone which it was the aim of the conference to evoke. It expressed open sympathy with "the afflictions" of many pastors and laymen who have stood firm from the first in the Confessional Church for the sovereignty of Christ, and for the freedom of the Church of Christ to preach His gospel." Worst of all, it coupled with the Confessional Church the Roman Catholic Church as also engaged in a struggle "against distortion and suppression of Christian witness". The whole text will be found in the appendix (p. 309).

The action of the Oxford Conference was reported to the Edinburgh Conference. The two German representatives of minority Churches, to whom the German Government had given special facilities to be present, demanded a special session, at which they explained that there was no persecution, and that the Oxford message was due to ignorance. Whereupon members of the conference insisted on another special session at which greetings could be sent to absent Churches. At that session another greeting was sent to the German Church, more guarded in form but substantially the same in substance. This will also be found in the appendix (p. 311).

The action of the oecumenical conferences roused Rosenberg to a new line of attack. In a book called *Rome Pilgrims* he tried to shew that the Evangelicals who criticised the *Myth of the Twentieth Century* were traitors to Luther and renegades to Rome. What evidently genuinely

puzzled and startled him was to find Protestants and Catholics agreeing together in their opposition to himself. This was too bad. It was to be expected—though it was shocking—to hear a Jesuit like Father Mückermann say that Catholics must obviously place their religion above everything, even the Fatherland. What one did not expect was that he should praise his “Protestant comrades”. Most unexpected—and most shocking—was it to find a “Confessional” Evangelical from Danzig writing as follows. “The struggle of the Catholic Church at the present time is precisely the same as that of the Confessional Church.” . . . The writer had gone on to say that he would have nothing to do with the methods whereby the “German Christians” and “German Heathen” wished to attack the Catholics. “We have much too great a respect for the steadfastness and loyalty of believing Catholic Christians, as for example the Bishop of Münster, to use such methods or to admit them. . . . We are profoundly persuaded that the struggle which the Catholic Church in Germany is conducting at present is not concerned with politics but with a true care for the Faith, and that the Catholic Church in fact preaches Christ. Of a truth we bear witness that the Catholic Church in Germany is a Confessional Church”. There could be no question of Protestantism and Catholicism forming one Church. That was the National Church error of the “German Christians”. But there is arising a solidarity of the two Churches against the attempts to expel Christianity from Germany. “In such a solidarity of conscience in relation to a common struggle we deeply deplore the fact that the Minister President of Prussia (Goering) as little understands the struggle of the Catholic Church against Anti-Christ as he does the similar struggle of our Confessional Church.” The reference was to General Goering’s notorious edict against “political Catholicism”.

Rosenberg shewed his ignorance of fundamental Christian doctrine when he found the following statement of Bishop Meiser even more disconcerting and even more evident a

proof that the German Lutherans had exchanged Luther for Loyola.

"We believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, which God the Lord calls out of all peoples and races, and we look for that day, in which all, who believe in Jesus Christ, will become under Him the one flock of the one Shepherd. Till then we hold fast the Confession of our Lutheran Church because it belongs to God's Word and is on it well and truly founded. But we certainly should not be happy in a 'Rome free National Catholic Church'."

But what chiefly roused Rosenberg's wrath was what he described as "The Oecumenical League of Nations". It had its origin in the fact that whereas after the war something new and wonderful broke out in Germany, as it had done at the Reformation, Church leaders like Nathan Söderblom, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the so-called "Confessional Church" went, not forwards, but back, behind Martin Luther and John Knox, to early Christian conditions and Old Testament priestly ideas, to a "Christendom" whose form and content no one clearly understood. The Oecumenical Movement was a sham. The letters of various English Bishops (particularly the Bishop of Chichester) against the supposed persecution of the Church were political acts, as were the official Church utterances from Scandinavia. It was an imitation of Rome with this difference, that Rome had dogmatic unity, but the Protestant "*Oecumene*" was like the League of Nations, a mass of struggling interests. For German Protestants to appeal to such a congeries against a movement and a government which had saved Germany from bloody chaos was an enormity indescribable. Rosenberg then prints a long history of the oecumenical movement, designed to shew that its whole motive is enmity to the National Socialist State. (It is extraordinary how naively the Nazis regard themselves as the centre of the whole universe.) From this survey he deduces that this "Oxford Movement" is a new kind of Freemasonry, fraught with the greatest

danger for European culture. Was not the Oxford Conference presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and did not Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, sit at his right hand? And was it not this same Johnson who, after a visit to freemason-bolshevist Spain with some of his colleagues declared that Red Spain was not the enemy of religion in that organ of the "Salon bolsheviks", the *News-Chronicle*.

"Johnson" was a subject on which Rosenberg could really warm up. Why, even the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is an anti-Bolshevist, had found the enormities of his Dean too much. When the Archbishop was beset on all sides, he had admitted that he had no power to remove the Dean. What a helpless Church leader to be the chairman of a World Conference! The more poor Rosenberg investigated all these strange phenomena, the more perplexing he found them. For example, though the Oxford Conference authorities' invitation to the Pope had been brusquely refused, that did not hinder them from renewing it. *Germania*, the Berlin Catholic paper, had said that the fact that this rebuff had not made the Oxford Conference turn into an anti-Catholic union shewed how serious the conference was. The odd thing is that Rosenberg thought this was meant for derision and not for praise!

If only the clergy would stick to the cure of souls, and if only all Churches had men like Adolf Hitler to protect them, all would be well.

His final reflection—and this indeed is the purpose of his book—is that for the political moulding of our life the historical Christian tradition is a hindrance not a help. "Honour, freedom, the common good—these are the values that without Christianity have become living parts of the German character in monumental fashion. These powers that preserve people and State have always been opposed by the ruling representatives of Christendom."

The sense of solidarity between Catholic and Protestant that has been created by Hitler's persecution of the Churches is most striking, and full of encouragement for

the future, both for Germany and for the Church. The Nazis have harped *ad nauseam* on the cleft driven into German life by the separation of the Confessions, and they have declared their intention of transcending it. They have succeeded, though not in the way that they intended. As far back as 1933 Cardinal Faulhaber spoke of the common struggle in which Catholics were engaged with their "separated brethren" in defending the Bible. In September 1937, Bishop von Preysing, preaching in his Cathedral, S. Hedwig's Church, in Berlin, used these words: "If the destructive war upon Christianity, which goes by the name of 'desectarianisation of public life', has any good side, it must be this: that never before to-day have we been so deeply linked in love and sympathy with our brothers who differ from us in creed. We are linked together by our clear discernment of that which we have in common: the belief in the one God, the God of the Trinity and in Him Whom He sent to us, Jesus Christ, the Lord, God and Man, God like the Father and the Holy Ghost, and Man like one of us."

Not less significant was the attitude adopted by the Berlin Catholic Church *Gazette* to Rosenberg's attacks on the Protestant Pilgrims to Rome as traitors to Luther. "There can be no doubt," it said, "that Rosenberg's estimate of Christianity has no relation to the Christianity of Luther. Nor can there be any doubt what Luther himself himself would do, were he alive to-day, and had he to choose between 'Rome or Rosenberg'."

The well-known Jesuit philosopher, Father Max Pribilla, took the same line as Count van Preysing. Writing in his review, *Stimmen der Zeit*, he observed that the coming-together of Catholics and Protestants irritated Rosenberg just because it demonstrated the universality of Christianity. It does not signify a reconciliation with Rome. But it is of importance because it rests on theology, not on politics.

It is characteristic of the Third Reich that the reply to Rosenberg's *Pilgrims to Rome*, made by the well-known Protestant writer, Herr Künneth, was not allowed to appear.

CHAPTER XIII

WHERE DOES THE MATTER STAND?

God has manifested Himself, not in Jesus Christ, but in Adolf Hitler.

REICHSVIKAR ENGELKE

As the conflict between the Churches and the Nazi regime is still raging at the time of writing, it is impossible to sum up the situation. Still less is it possible to prophesy what future developments may be. But as 1937 passed into 1938 it happened that several utterances were made which help to throw light on the alignment of forces.

Pride of place may be given to the speech delivered by His Holiness the Pope to the College of Cardinals on Christmas Eve, 1937, which was largely devoted to the religious persecution in Germany. His Holiness emphasised the word "persecution". "We must call things by their right names," he said. "In Germany there is, in fact, a religious persecution. For long they tried to make us believe that there was no persecution. We know, however, that there is a grievous persecution, and more even, that there has rarely been a persecution so serious, so fearful, so painful and so disastrous in its widespread effects. This is a persecution in which neither the exercise of force, nor the pressure of threats, nor the subterfuges of cunning and artifice, have been spared." It was a persecution that reached down to the deepest foundations, to ultimate principles and truth. It was all the more sad to him because he so greatly respected German culture and scholarship, and had so many friends in Germany itself.

The Pope next dealt with the charge that it was all a question, not of religion, but of politics. "It is said in Germany that the Catholic religion is no longer Catholic but political, and this pretext is put forward to justify

the persecution, as though it were no real persecution, but only a measure of defence." He reminded his hearers that this was exactly the charge brought against Christ when He was taken before Pilate. He was not moved by politics but by religion. There was much that he would like to say about all the rearmament and preparation for war that was going on. But he refrained, just because he wanted to avoid all appearance of being political. "It is certainly true," said the Pope, "that it is necessary to insist that the citizen in his civic life must conform to the law of God, of Jesus Christ. But is this religion or politics? It is certainly not politics. We desire, therefore, that in civic life, in human and social life, the rights of God, which are also the rights of the soul, should always be respected. And that is all that we have always taught." This accusation of abusing religion for political ends grieved him most, because it was a calumny against so many priests and laity who were only anxious to obey the law of God, to do the work of good Christians, and therefore to live as exemplary citizens.

On November 23rd Dr. Kerl made a speech at Fulda at a great Nazi demonstration which was instantly recognised as specially important. It was called a "programme speech", and was, in fact, a defence of the attitude of the Government towards the Churches. "Religion," said the Church Minister, "and *Weltanschauung* must always spring from the same root. Unfortunately the official Churches had not always confined themselves to their proper field. National Socialism is a religious movement, which not only thoroughly recognises the relationship to God and the Divine ordering of things, but it also knows these things by experience. We hold it a duty to preserve religious freedom for Germans in all circumstances. Everyone has the right to belong to what religious community he wishes. There must be no misuse of religion in any circumstances. It is not the business of the National Socialist Government to support the Churches financially. That is the business of those who believe in them. If that cannot be accomplished at present, it none the less remains the aim. Neither

State nor Movement has ever thought of interfering in the strife of the Church about dogmas; they represent much more a positive Christianity. The business of National Socialism during the last four and a half years has been nothing else than an absolute positive Christianity,—to exhibit, in fact, that faith that really does move mountains. We hear about that faith in the Churches; but we have not seen it—neither in the War nor in the terrible time after the War. Then one came to us who gave those words an unexampled meaning. It was he who said to us, 'Believe in the mission which God Himself has entrusted to you. Recognise that it is deeds not words that matter, that God has put you in this world, that you may as Germans care for Germany. Then you will see the miracle—not indeed that comes down from Heaven—but that fulfils our faith'."

He (Herr Kerrl) had had no idea of laughing at the Divine Sonship of Jesus. From the beginning the State had tried to work frankly with the Confessions. They had made a concordat with the Roman Catholic Church, and had done their best to promote a united *Reichskirche*. Large sums of money were paid to the Churches—almost a million marks! How could it be said that the National Socialist Party was anti-Church, anti-Christian, or anti-religious? Neither the State nor the Party could be associated with any particular religious community. But in spite of its excessive tolerance the State had continually been assaulted by the clergy of both Confessions. It was a remarkable thing that since 1933 there had been 7,000 proceedings against representatives of the Churches. If the religious communities had attended to their religion as they should have done, they could quite easily have lived at peace with the National Socialist State. In this state, anyhow, only the State could rule, and only one could lead. Our whole business is to follow him in complete discipline and submission. The Free Churches had succeeded because they had been non-political. The Church policy of the National Socialists was to turn the political Churches into true religious communities. The State had

tried to overcome the strife of parties in the Evangelical Church by the Church Committees. But the Church parties would not have it. The Führer had then stretched out the helping hand of the State by offering new elections. That they had not taken place hitherto was entirely the fault of the Church. One uniform direction had not emerged in the Church. The State felt itself precluded from doing anything more in the matter, until the Church parties composed their differences. Then an election would be possible. [In other words it must be a Nazi election, in which everyone votes "Ja" to what the Government proposes.] In spite of the hateful Church strife which had extended to the Church buildings, the State had not interfered with the rights of the Church. But the State could not possibly allow that money should be collected for Party purposes in church and misused for anti-State propaganda. The religious instruction in the schools had never been changed. Herr Kerrl added—amid great applause—"We cannot recognise that the Church has the right to secure that men shall be educated in all fields as it thinks right; we must, on the contrary, allow the National Socialist State to bring up the scholars in the way that it thinks right. The Churches need not be afraid that we shall get in their way, if they don't get in ours. Christ did not teach them to fight against the National Socialist Race teaching. He had Himself conducted an unexampled struggle against the Jews, who, for that reason, crucified Him. The teachings of Christ in no way contradict those of National Socialism. The German people would not allow itself to be held up in its march to the Future by political Confessional circles."

The *Schwarze Korps* on the 9th December proceeded to draw the following conclusion from Kerrl's statement that National Socialism is a religious movement:

"Therefore the State itself is the God-inspired life form of the community of the people. It possesses its own moral law by the Divine ordering, by the Revelation of God in Nature, in Fate, in the life and death of the Peoples. The

National Socialist State will make itself felt in all spheres of life. It will demand what is natural, and fight what is unnatural. That is our State religion. This State religion must stand above the Confessions."

This only said somewhat more strongly what was implied in Kerl's utterance, as was shewn when shortly afterwards Kerl gave a lecture on "Religion and a Philosophy of Life". He then said that the achievements of National Socialism shewed that its principles were the principles of an eternal and unalterable religion. National Socialism was inaugurating a new revolution and reformation which would bring about a new cultural epoch which even the Church would not be able to resist. "This transformation would require time, however, and I, as minister, shall not attempt to interfere by force in the irrevocable passage of events. . . . There must be no Church which stands above the State, nor any Church which stands independent of the State."

It is strange indeed that the authors of these sentiments saw nothing odd in the condemnation of their opponents because they confused religion with politics. The real objection was, of course, that it was the wrong politics.

The Church and the Army

The place of religion in public life was at the beginning of this year treated from quite a different angle by a soldier, Colonel von Schaewen in a military paper, *Soldatentum*. His thesis was that religion is necessary to make a good soldier. He took as his text the "Duties of the German Soldier" issued in 1934 by President von Hindenburg and the War Minister, von Blomberg, which contained the following sentence: "Self-confident but modest, upright and loyal, God-fearing and sincere, discreet and incorruptible—the soldier should be a model of vigorous manhood for the whole people." The Colonel said this concerned not only the chaplain but the platoon officials. "When he marches to church, the soldier should see his superiors in front of him as on all other occasions. Then,

indeed, will the work of the chaplains not be in vain." He assumed that religion meant belonging to the Christian Church. His article appeared in full in *Germania*, which still displays a Catholic tinge. This was not at all to the taste of the *Schwarze Korps*. "God-belief" was necessary. But it must not be connected with Churches. The point of view maintained with increasing firmness by the organ of Himmler and the Black Guards was expounded with complete frankness.

"One can hardly designate Germany nowadays as a 'Christian State' in the sense in which formal Christianity is the State religion. Actuated by a profound inner necessity, the believing German has cast off the shackles of the creeds because he believes in serving his God through deeds rather than prostration before, and mechanical repetition of, dogma. Thus, the conception of 'God-belief' is characteristic of the release from denominational trammels. . . . This is the way things are, and whoever surveys them without denominational prejudice can come to only one conclusion, namely, that a denominational soldiery can no more exist than can a denominational school or youth organisation. . . . A soldier's religion finds the greatest and highest revelation of God in our own nation, whose defence is the most sublime form of worship of which a German is capable."

A special interest attaches to this bit of controversy because it brings out the profound discomfort felt by leading soldiers at the harm done by the *Weltanschauung* to the soldier. In the complicated struggle that arose over the demission of von Blomberg this discomfort found a voice. The Generals who were retired insisted on the retention of chaplains, and objected to the inroads of the *Weltanschauung*. No doubt they based their objection on the technical argument that the Christian was the more reliable soldier. It is in itself an interesting admission. But there is every reason to suppose that some of them at any rate were concerned to fortify the position of Christian teaching for its own sake.

Another sidelight on the standpoint of the Army is afforded by a memorial drawn up by Army Chaplains in the early part of 1938 and sent to Hitler. They asserted

that the State and the Nazi Party were now not merely attacking the Churches but attacking Christianity itself. They instanced among other things the appointment of Rosenberg as the first holder of the prize founded as the German rival of the Nobel Peace Prize. An even more concrete example was the fact that of the 18,000 Protestant pastors in Germany 1,300 have been in prison or have been arrested since 1934. Actions of this kind made a rift in national unity and were driving at least 15 per cent of the population into bitter and active opposition to the State and the Party. This must gravely interfere with the military preparedness which is so essential.

A Footnote on the Legal Position of the Evangelical Church

In the sphere of Church Government Dr. Werner issued a decree on March 8th, 1938 which fastened the bonds of State control much more firmly on the Evangelical Church. It was based on the Decree for the Security of the German Evangelical Church on December 10th, 1937. By this decree the Provincial Churches (*Landeskirchen*) were forbidden to make any regulations on any matter which did not affect faith or worship without the consent of the Leader of the Chancellery of the German Evangelical Church, that is Dr. Werner himself. Commenting on this regulation the *Frankfurter Zeitung* observed that after the failure of the Church Committees to form a unification of the Church the responsibility for doing so had been handed over to Dr. Werner as a neutral (*sic*). The new decree bound the Provincial Churches to the leadership of the Reichs Evangelical Church so clearly that it was now plain that the *Reichskirche* was no longer simply a roof over the independent Provincial Churches, but was the head and centre of these bodies which only retained their independence so far as confession and cultus were concerned. The exception is illusory because State domination on this scale is a clear invasion of the spiritual independence of the Churches and therefore of the Confession of faith.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TWO RELIGIONS

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

I John v. 4

ONE THING STANDS out clearly from these statements. The struggle between the National Socialist Government and the Christian Churches shews no signs of abating. Nor can it. They are fundamentally irreconcilable, so long as National Socialism is committed to the view that it is itself a religion which can tolerate no rival. It is an orthodoxy that must use every effort to subdue the heretic. What makes it specially dangerous is that it is the religion of a particularly uncultivated section of the community. It finds its most ardent followers in a class which tends to idolise brutality, which is insensitive to the spiritual *imponderabilia* that are the chief elements in human dignity, and which is convinced that there is no ideal that cannot be swept aside by a combination of propaganda and violence. That element is to be found in all nations. It is particularly strong among the Germans, as their best friends have always recognised. The need for asserting German rights against the rest of the world has given men of this kind an opportunity of asserting themselves not only against the foreigner, but against the finer elements in Germany itself.

The meaning of Herr Kerrl's language and that of the *Schwarze Korps* is unmistakable, even though the former puts the matter more guardedly than the latter. Kerrl says the Nazi State can tolerate no Church which stands independent of the State. The Black Guards say that the

German soldier (which means the whole of German manhood) must be cut off from the Churches—and for the reason that the Nation is itself the highest object of a German's adoration. In speaking thus they are not using a hyperbole, but making a perfectly precise and definite statement. They have a religion. It is a belief in the God who has chosen Germany for Himself, to set it above all the other peoples of the earth. Strangely enough the language that comes natural in an attempt to describe the Jew-hating Nazi *Weltanschauung* is language drawn from the Old Testament. Though it might be even more suitable to seek in the Koran the true model.

"There is no God but the One God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Even thus speaks Dr. Ley, the powerful leader of the Labour Front. "I believe on this earth in Adolf Hitler alone. I believe in one Lord God who made me and guides me, and I believe that this Lord God has sent Adolf Hitler to us." The most unloving and intolerant religion that the world has ever seen is reproduced in the National Socialist movement; and—like Mohammedanism—it is a religion to be propagated by the sword. Again, like Mohammedanism, the Nazi religion is a religion of blind obedience. There is something undeniably imposing in such a religion. The Mohammedan, wherever he is, on land, or in a boat, in prison or among his friends, will, with supreme indifference to his surroundings, unroll his mat and perform his daily devotions. In the same spirit the true Nazi will not ask whether it is agreeable or convenient to spend long days and many months in the labour camp and in military service. It must be! The Führer demands it! The Nation needs this service if its glory is to be revealed. In view of the selfishness of the human heart, the unquestioning recognition that *Gemeinnutz* (the common good) takes precedence of *Eigennutz* (private good) has always something magnificent about it. It is a triumph over nature.

Xenophon in his *Polity of the Lacedaemonians* describes the education of the Spartans in language which might be

used without change to describe the ideals of the *Hitler Jugend*. "As for learning, they had just what was absolutely necessary (gymnastics and music). All the rest of their education was calculated to make them subject to command, to endure labour, to fight and to conquer." As in Sparta, too, the Nazi ideal is a *Männerbund*, a society essentially male. The Spartans, however, it may be said, brooked no tyrant. It was devotion to the State that inspired them, not obedience to a Demi-God.

Yet Sparta was frozen and static. Its patriotism was deadly, just because it was intolerant of every point of view or interest other than its own. It was not Sparta but Athens that left to the world the real legacy of the Greeks, in philosophy, in political thought, in architecture and statuary and poetry and drama—that legacy which has become part of the universal life of mankind. Sparta was the foe of culture, as is the Nazi mentality. It was quite in keeping that the Nazi regime was inaugurated in Berlin—and now in Salzburg—by a bonfire of books which included works by some of the greatest writers in the German language—because they were Jews or Catholics!

Athens, however, has its own warnings. "Democracy," said Plato, "and only democracy, lays the foundation of despotism—that is to say, the most intense freedom lays the foundation of the heaviest and fiercest slavery." Liberty may perish, if those who proclaim their belief in it are unwilling to accept the responsibility of defending it, to undertake the common action that defence involves, to endure hardness, and—if need be—to die on its behalf.

But liberty may also be destroyed from within by the worship of wealth, by those who, while they take the phrases of freedom on their lips, are willing, and—as it would seem—eager, to sacrifice the cause of liberty by making terms with the despots who loathe liberty.

Though, ultimately, National Socialism must be sterile, like Mohammedanism, it lacks the undoubted dignity which Mohammedanism at its best displays, the dignity that can come to man only when he bows down before the

Almighty Will of the transcendent God. A philosophy that teaches young men to believe they are themselves gods opens the door to that Hubris, that impudent self-confidence, which it was one of the chief purposes of Mohammed—as of Sparta—to subdue. Where a belief in a High and Holy God is lacking, the vulgarities of Goebbels and the obscenities of Streicher are quite natural consequences. When Hitler had effected the rape of Austria, he declared that it was an execution of the wish and will of Providence, and he called on every German to bow in humility before the will of the Almighty, who had carried out a miracle in a few weeks. But the Providence of whom he speaks is merely God immanent in the German People—and in himself. It is not the God who judges the nations, putting down one and setting up another, according to His Will. When Hitler assumes the prophet's mantle, it immediately becomes plain that he is a false prophet, one of those who speak their own word, and not the word of the Lord.

Professor Bergmann has got to the root of the matter in his exposition of the "German Religion" in which he believes.¹ "It is certainly no belief in the beyond and certainly no dogmatic belief, but a high faith in Man, a natural ennobling and fulfilling faith in Man in his own strength, without any Divine help from Beyond. It cannot be any belief in a grace of salvation, which maims the will, and makes it passive, yes, which teaches man to believe in his own irreparable baseness and moral helplessness. No religion which says to him, 'You cannot do it by your own strength, consequently do not use your own strength' —'Christ the Saviour is there'".² But it is a religion of the iron hardness of the categorical imperative, which says to man, You can, then you must: What can you, what must you, do? You can endlessly lift on high the racial and spiritual and moral picture of Man, no longer in the pale

¹ *Nordland*. 15th February, 1938.

² A reference to a well-known German hymn, "*Christ der Retter ist da*".

distance of Heaven and the Beyond. A religion of the will to the Divine, a religion of the Will; no weak and lyrical surrender and redemptive religion will the German religion be! A religion which sees the Saviour and Helper when man reaches out the Divine hand from himself to himself for resurrection and development upwards into the highest and noblest humanity."

This racial humanism, confined to this world, and only capable of apprehension by a single people, of which Hitler is the prophet, must, as Bergmann sees, find itself in sharpest opposition to the Christian teaching of man's weakness and the salvation that, coming from above, makes him that which he could not be by himself. Both religions,—Christianity and National Socialism—it must be acknowledged, have been persecuting religions. But the difference lies here. When the Christian Church has persecuted, and used earthly force to compel obedience in the spiritual sphere, it has been acting contrary to its own essence. When National Socialism persecutes the Jew, the parson, and the priest, the pacifist, the internationalist and the scholar, it is acting in obedience to the very order of its being. It is of the earth, earthy. In this world, and with the weapons of this world, it must achieve the only victory that it knows about, the only triumph that it values. What is that victory? It has been summed up in the epigram of a witty Frenchman. "*C'est la victoire des boches sur les allemands.*"

It is, of course, true, that many pastors—and lay people—have come to some more or less uncomfortable accommodation with the Nazi regime. But they have done so because they have been content to be silent on those points where the Nazi religion challenges the religion of Christ. It is the minority, as always, who have seen the fundamental contradiction. The amazing thing—especially when the history of State dominance over religion in Germany is borne in mind—is the great size of that minority.¹

¹ If the large numbers of "neutrals" who sympathise secretly with the Confessionals be reckoned in, it is a large majority.

One who belongs to another Church, and a Church that presented so weak and divided a front when, by the rejection of the Revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons, its freedom to worship God according to its lights was challenged, can only bow his head in admiration before these resolute men who have staked all on loyalty to the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ. It certainly does not become us to utter one word of reproach for those who have not been able to rise to those sacrificial heights. Nor may we criticise those who have so risen, because they have not done something else as well: because, for example, they have not made a violent protest against the shameful treatment of the Jews, or the horror of the concentration camps.

Karl Barth, himself a Swiss, has forestalled any such criticism for us in his lecture¹ at Oxford, when he asks how little likely it is that the Christians of any other country would have given greater proof. "But even if it be assumed that a greater proof would in fact have been possible, this remains true; a *small* proof of the reality of the faith has been given and is still being given by the Church in Germany. She has proved and is proving that the Christian faith is not, as one, no doubt, sometimes hears it said, a mere matter of tradition and custom, a disposition with a tincture of morality, even perhaps an imagination, which one would be prepared as a matter of course to give up again when the wind is blowing in the opposite direction. Proof has been given during these years in Germany, in all modesty and weakness, with much folly and uncertainty, that the Christian faith is a fact that is not to be set aside—not only not in the inner secrets of souls, but also not in the visible actions of human life here on earth. The Christian faith is being publicly confessed in Germany to-day by men, known and unknown, for whom it would be very much more convenient not to confess it. By men who thereby risk their position in life,

¹ *Trouble and Promise in the Struggle of the Church in Germany*. K. Barth, Oxford, 1938.

their income, occasionally their freedom and even their life. The faith is being confessed to-day by men who would prefer not to have to confess it. Why? Because they are good patriots, because they love their country, because it would rejoice their hearts to be able to go with the new State, because it grieves them to oppose it. And now they are not allowed to go with the stream: they are tied fast, and they must resist it. They must allow themselves to be denied the name of a good German for the sake of the name of Christ. And they let that happen, though they were and are bound by nothing except by the faith, by nothing except by the First Commandment! Is that not a good proof of the reality of this faith?"

The Pope is in the right when he uses the word "persecution". It was justified when the group of army chaplains addressed a memorial to Hitler pointing out that the State and the Nazi party were now not merely fighting the Churches but Christianity itself. As evidence they adduced, among other things, the selection of Rosenberg by Hitler as the first recipient of a State prize designed as a Nazi counterpart of the Nobel prize. But they went on to a more concrete example of ruthlessness. Since 1934 as many as 1,300 out of the 18,000 Protestant pastors in Germany have been in prison or at any rate arrested, some of them several times. They might have added the deliberate and concentrated effort to remove youth altogether from the influence of the Churches, the complete suppression of any freedom for Churchmen—be they bishops or pastors—to defend themselves in print from the stream of slander and defamation poured out on them, the refusal to allow any public meetings to be held outside church buildings, the forbidding to the Confessional Church of the right to collect money for its own support, the closed theological colleges, the perpetual spying on sermons, the tapped telephones, and the censored correspondence. If these things are not persecution, by what word are they to be described?

The struggle of the Roman Catholics and of the Confessional Protestants in Germany is a struggle for freedom

of conscience, and therefore one that calls for the sympathy of all Christians everywhere, and for whatever assistance they can give. But what gives it so great an importance, a significance that reaches far beyond the limits of the particular conflict and the confines of Germany, is that it has been maintained when every other freedom of thought has been subdued by a tyranny that seems to go beyond even that of Russia. It is seen to be true that in the last resort the dignity of the human spirit can only be preserved by those who are anchored in eternity, and that its greatest heights are reached precisely by those who, conscious of their own infirmities, commit their cause to a Higher Power.

What is the dogma before which the clear-sighted Christians of Germany have refused to bow? It is the assertion that the rise of Adolf Hitler, his success in restoring German self-confidence, and his recovery of German military might, with its promise of reversing the defeat of 1918—that these things are a miracle of God, a Divine Act, more significant than the appearance on the earth of Jesus Christ. Some have endeavoured to equate the two by combining the Swastika with the Cross. But the more thoroughgoing of the Nazis, including Hitler himself, regard this compromise with a contempt equal to that of orthodox Christians. It is merely a useful pawn in the political game. The essential thing is the apotheosis of Hitler himself, because with that goes the triumph of those freebooters who got rid of all possible rivals in the blood purge of June 30th, 1934.

This apotheosis, the religious symbolism of the Party Day, and the appeal to the mystical instinct so strong in the German people, are necessary because only by a *Weltanschauung* that transcends politics can the grip of the ruling caste on the men and women of the great German race throughout the world be maintained.

On the merely political issue Hitler would have had most Catholics and Protestants in Germany behind him. But the identification of this man, with his cruelties and

concentration camps, his ruthless treachery and his inflated pride, with the activity of the God revealed in Jesus Christ—that is impossible! When the choice was offered—as it is clearly offered—Hitler or Christ, there can be but one answer.

The tyranny which is tearing the heart of the German people imposes on thousands of patriotic men and women a tragic division of allegiance. Rejoice as they may in the awakening of their country, they are revolted by the deep injury inflicted on its soul.

It is often said that Hitler must be admired for the great things that he has done for Germany. There must be many who will ask whether the revival of the hideous ideal of fierce and frantic nationalism, a crass materialism which is not less materialist because it drapes itself in the garments of mysticism, and which bludgeons from its path all the finer human sensibilities, is anything but a disaster for a nation unusually richly endowed with gifts of poetic, philosophic, scientific and musical vision.

It will be an even greater disaster for the rest of the world if they allow themselves to bow down before the devouring cruelty of Moloch.

APPENDIX A

SERMON OF DR. NIEMÖLLER

June 27th, 1937

(The last sermon before Dr. Niemöller's arrest.)

Israel has nevertheless God for his comfort! Grace be with us, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Second Epistle; Acts 5, 34-42. The story of Gamaliel.)

IT WAS AN extremely critical moment in the life of the Church. The Apostles had defied the prohibition to speak which had been laid upon them; yes, indeed, they had made the formal confession: "We must obey God rather than man." They had even taken the offensive in the case and had accused their judges of murdering the Saviour sent by God; and had gone on to make known to them the promise of atonement and forgiveness of sins. And then came the words: "But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart and were minded to slay them." At this moment Gamaliel rose to his feet, and we must recognise that it was thanks to his intervention that the Apostles were freed, and that it was possible for the Community to go on living and working. What we feel about him is certainly therefore some sort of thankfulness; undoubtedly he was a clever, upright and pious man. And we wish there might be such another in these critical days of the Church, through which we are now living—for some respected, far-sighted man of leadership, who, as an intelligent man would appeal for caution, as an upright man would appeal for honour, as a pious man would appeal for reverence to God. Perhaps to-day, too, such a voice would command a hearing. Perhaps such frivolous moral

judgments might then be avoided as are illustrated in that Press notice of last Friday, which had the heading "Incitement to Disobedience". The Prussian Council of Brethren will define their position about this notice, and I will just say this one word, because I must say it. When at the end of this notice it says: "Yet another Parson has escaped arrest by flight," no doubt it is Pfarrer Asmussen who is meant, who has left Berlin by the advice of the Prussian Council. He has neither received a summons, nor has a warrant for his arrest been issued. And I have informed the Minister of Justice that it goes without saying Pfarrer Asmussen holds himself in readiness in case a summons is issued. We have no more thought of using our own powers to escape the arm of the authorities than had the Apostles of old. No more are we ready to keep silence at man's behest, when God commands us to speak. For it is, and must remain the case, that we must obey God rather than man. The case to-day is the same as it was then. And, in these circumstances, Gamaliel's counsel is a wise counsel, for it is unwise to create martyrs in a cause which one wishes to defeat; it is moreover good and proper counsel, for it is unrighteous to use the power of the sword to fight men's convictions; it is also a pious counsel, as it is impious to forestall the judgment of God, which we do not yet know. The question is—Would a new Gamaliel and a Decree granting real freedom of faith and of conscience help us in the end?

My dear Brethren—do not let us deceive ourselves! The Supreme Council accepted Gamaliel's advice as regards freedom of conscience, and released the prisoners—though not without beating them and renewing the embargo on their speech. "They charged the Apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." And in the very next chapter of the Acts there breaks out the lightning flash of the first Persecutions—which are associated with the name of Stephen, and where the driving force was Saul, himself a pupil of Gamaliel.

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It is clear that that tolerance, for which a lance is now being broken, can by no means be carried out as regards Christian Faith and Christian Confession. It is clear that one cannot in this case adopt a position of tentative neutrality and wait to see how things turn out before making a final decision. For all his cleverness, uprightness and piety, Gamaliel makes a mistake, for he imagines the case of Jesus of Nazareth is already settled, just like the other cases which he cited of Theudas and Judas were settled. And now again in the case of the Apostles, a movement was concerned, the success of which could not yet be foretold. As a matter of fact, the Apostles preach exactly the opposite of what Gamaliel believes and acts upon. They preach Him who was crucified and rose again. They preach that as regards their affairs the decision of God has already been made, and that any apparent success or failure, makes no difference to this at all; that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth is the living Christ and Lord of His Church; that the decision whether he should be recognised or rejected cannot possibly be made dependent on what the future may bring forth. He who fails to make his decision of faith for the Lord when the Word of the Cross is spoken to him, he makes the decision against Him at the very moment when he thinks he has avoided committing himself. It is the Word of Jesus "He who is not with me is against me", which renders all this neutrality in practice impossible. It is the message of the Cross which places before us the question: Either—Or; belief or unbelief; salvation or destruction; life or condemnation. Thus all neutrality, even that which is well meant, turns one into an enemy, even if God may use one—as everything must serve for the carrying out of His will upon earth. For us Christians, however, the counsel of Gamaliel, however well and honestly he may have meant it (and even if God used him, and still to-day may use him for the help of the Community), nevertheless this counsel may represent a serious temptation to us in prevailing upon us to judge by success, to judge by appearances, and to base our faith in any way on our

experiences. This temptation has more power over us than perhaps we find easy to admit, for it is all too easy out of the suffering and the hardship which we have to go through, to draw the conclusion—after all:—God is *not* with us! after all, the work for which we stand is *not* of God!—It is no use therefore to trouble about it further—all is in vain!—

Dear Friends, let us not forget that God offers us salvation in the Cross of his Son: that it is in the hearing and believing of this message that He gives us salvation—and that there is nothing else in Heaven or on earth upon which we can rest or build our faith.

In this time of very special trial and struggle, we must bear in mind that every attempt to gain security by some other means, every turning of our eyes after some other source of strength, and support, works exactly in the opposite way to that which we intend: in fact, that it will cause us shipwreck, and we shall sink! The Cross of Jesus, yes that does indeed seem the end of all things and abandonment by God. Our eyes can see nothing else in it. If we hold with Gamaliel, we come to this—*man's* counsel and *man's* activities! But the Gospel says: it is just at this point that the love of God triumphs and that it reveals itself to the faithful. Here is God's counsel and God's work and he who believes has it! The suffering of our community, the shame which we have to bear when we take our stand beside the Crucified One, that is indeed a heavy burden and hardship; we feel the weight of it, and doubt creeps into our soul; Our faith! In the end is it only man's counsel and man's work? But Jesus says: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you". Faith hears this promise, clings to it, and finds joy and comfort.

Truly, my brothers and sisters, is it joy and comfort? We note to-day that neither we nor anyone else is helped by pious words mingled with a little Protestant enthusiasm

and with our customary measure of healthy optimism. The pressure is growing; anyone who has gone through the fiery ordeal of the tempter in these last days—I think, for instance, how on Wednesday the Secret Police penetrated into the closed Church of Friedrich Werder, and arrested at the altar eight members of the Council of Brethren who were assembled there, and took them away; I think how yesterday at Saarbrücken, six women and a trusted man of the Evangelical Community were arrested, because they had circulated an election leaflet of the Confessional Church at the direction of the Council of Brethren—I repeat, he who has indeed suffered all this, cannot be far from the words of the Prophet; he also would like to say—“Now, oh Lord, take away my life”. And anyone who, like myself last Friday evening, had no one beside him at the Communion Service except three young Gestapo men, whose duty it was to inform upon the Community of Jesus in their praying, in their singing and in their teaching; young men who certainly were once baptized in the name of Jesus, and who certainly have pledged their faith to the Saviour, who are now laying traps for his flock. Such an one cannot easily save himself from the shame of the Church. “Lord have mercy!”

And we recall how to-day the Pulpit of the Church of Anna remains empty, because our Pastor and Brother Müller, with 47 other Christian brothers and sisters of our Evangelical Church have been taken into custody; and we think at the same time how the whole Christian community has been told that they too are by no means innocent, and how the first prosecutions are to take place in the week beginning to-day. Then my dear friends, is it joy and comfort? Or despair and intimidation?

There is indeed no hope except to hold firm to the Crucified One and to learn to say in simple and therefore certain faith “in the bottom of my heart Thy name and Cross alone shine forth at all times and in all hours, and therefore I can be glad”. It may still be a long road until we are truly glad, like those who, like the Apostles, were counted worthy

to suffer shame for Jesus' name. The way will not be opened to-day or to-morrow; and that may be good, so that we should learn not to take impressions for belief, but in the seriousness of the struggle to mark the word of our Lord, and that we shall not cease to learn the message of the Cross, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, perhaps for the first time aright, and to teach it and to hear it and to preach it; for our faith lives in this word, and our joy flows from this word "Lord, evermore give us this bread".

APPENDIX B

THE NATIONAL CONCORDAT (Agreement between Germany and the Vatican)

The Text of the Concordat

Concordat between the Holy See and the German Empire
(Reich)

HIS HOLINESS, POPE Pius XI., and the President of Germany, being motivated by the same desire to strengthen and further the friendly relations between the Holy See and Germany,

Having the will to regulate in a permanent and mutually satisfactory way the relation between the Holy See and the State throughout Germany,

Have resolved to enter into a solemn agreement which will complement the concordats closed with certain individual German States and secure for the rest a consistent treatment of the pertinent questions, according to principles laid down herein.

To this end, His Holiness Pope Pius XI. has named His Eminence the Cardinal Eugen Pacelli, His Secretary of State, as His plenipotentiary, and the President of the German Reich has named the Vice Chancellor of the German Reich, Franz von Papen, who, having exchanged their respective credentials and found them to be in good and proper form, have agreed upon the following articles:

Article 1

The German Reich guarantees the freedom of creed and of public worship to the Catholic religion.

It acknowledges the right of the Catholic Church—within the limits of the law of the land,—to administer its own affairs and to make laws and regulations binding

upon its membership within the jurisdiction of the Church.

Article 2

The concordats established with Bavaria (1924), Prussia (1919), and Baden (1932) remain in force and the rights and privileges of the Catholic Church in the states named remain intact. For the other states the provisions of this Concordat apply *in toto*. The latter are also binding on the three states named in so far as they refer to matters not regulated in the separate concordats or in so far as they complement the existing terms.

In the future, concordats with separate states will be entered into only with the consent of the German Government.

Article 3

In order to cultivate the good relations between the Holy See and the German Reich, an apostolic nuntius will reside in the German capital, as heretofore, and an ambassador of the Reich will reside at the Holy See.

Article 4

The Holy See enjoys complete freedom in its correspondence with the Bishops, the clergy and the other membership of the Catholic Church in Germany. The same holds good for the Bishops and other diocesan authorities in their intercourse with the believers in all matters concerning their pastoral office.

Notices, regulations, pastoral letters, official diocesan papers and other enactments for the spiritual leadership of the believers, which are promulgated by the church authorities within their jurisdiction, may be published without hindrance and be brought to the attention of the membership in the forms previously in use.

Article 5

In the exercise of their spiritual office the priesthood enjoys the protection of the State in the same manner as state officials. The State will prosecute insults to their

persons or in their capacity as clergymen, as well as disturbances of public worship, according to the general state laws, and when necessary it will grant the protection of the civil authorities.

Article 6

Clergy and members of conventual orders are freed from the obligation to accept public office and other responsibilities not reconcilable with the provisions of canonical law, with the priesthood, or the rules of their Order, respectively. This applies particularly to the office of bailiff, juror, member of the board of taxation, or of the courts of finance.

Article 7

In order to accept position or office in the State or in a corporation of a governmental character, clergymen require the "nihil obstat" of their chief diocesan officer as well as of the corresponding public official. The "nihil obstat" may be revoked at any time on important grounds of ecclesiastical interest.

Article 8

The salaries of clergymen are freed from confiscation¹ on the same terms as those of national and state officials.

Article 9

Clergymen cannot be questioned by judicial or other authorities for information concerning facts confided to them in the exercise of their spiritual guidance and which therefore come under the duty of pastoral reticence.

Article 10

The use of clerical dress or that of the dress of a conventual order by laymen, or by clergymen or members of Orders to whom such use has been definitely forbidden, and the civil authorities duly notified of this fact, is subject to the same penalties as the misuse of the military uniform.

¹ *I.e.*, they cannot be garnishee-ed for non-payment of debts other than wages or taxes.

Article 11

The present diocesan organisation and circumscription of the Catholic Church in Germany will remain. Any future establishment of a new bishopric or church province or other changes of the diocesan limits remain, in so far as they concern changes within the boundaries of the separate states, subject to mutual agreement with the state authorities. In the case of establishments or changes which affect several states, the agreement is arrived at with the national government which is then left to make the arrangements with the affected states. The same is true of changes in the boundaries of the church provinces, in so far as they may involve several states. These terms do not apply to shifting of church boundaries solely in the interest of local pastoral administration.

A reorganisation of the diocesan system and circumscription will be the subject of discussion with the Holy See on the part of the German Government.

Article 12

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article XI ecclesiastical offices can be freely established or changed if no appropriations from the civic funds are sought. The co-operation of the State in the formation and reorganisation of parishes takes place in accordance with the outlines laid down in agreements with the Bishops and for the greatest possible uniformity of which the national government will make recommendations to the state authorities.

Article 13

Catholic parishes, congregational associations, and diocesan associations, the Episcopal Sees, the bishoprics and chapters, the conventual orders and religious fraternities, as well as the institutions, foundations and properties of the Catholic Church, retain (respectively, receive) the status of public corporations under the general law. They remain public corporations in so far as they have been

such in the past, the others may receive equal rights according to the general civil law.

Article 14

As a matter of principle, the Church has the right freely to appoint all church offices and benefices without the co-operation of the State or of the civil communities, in so far as other provisions have not been made in previous concordats under Article II. This rule applies to the suffragan bishoprics of Rottenburg and Mainz, the bishopric Meissen, and the Metropolitan See of Freiburg on the Rhein. The rule holds also for the first two suffragan bishoprics regarding the appointments of cathedral chapter positions and the regulations of the right of patronage. Furthermore, there is accord on the following points:

1. Catholic clergymen who hold an ecclesiastical office in Germany, or exercise pastoral or educational functions, must
 - a. be German citizens,
 - b. have graduated from a German higher educational institution,
 - c. have studied at least three years in the field of theology and philosophy in a German state school, a German ecclesiastical academy, or a papal college in Rome.
2. The Bull for the appointment of Archbishops, Bishops, Coadjutors *cum jure successionis* or of a *Prælat* *nullius* will not be issued until the name of the appointee is submitted to the representative of the national government in the respective state and it has been ascertained that no objections of a general political nature exist.

By agreement of Church and State, Paragraph 1, Sections a, b, and c, may be disregarded or set aside.

Article 15

Conventual orders and religious associations, save for the special provisions of the paragraph following, are not subject to restrictions on the part of the State, either regarding their number, selection of their members, activity

in spiritual service, education, care of the sick, and charitable work, or in the management of their affairs and the administration of their property.

Ecclesiastical heads of Orders, having their headquarters in Germany, must be German citizens. Heads of Orders or provincial organisations whose headquarters lie outside Germany, have the right of visitation of the branches lying within Germany.

The Holy See will endeavour so to organise the existing conventual houses that as far as possible they may not be under government of foreign heads. Exceptions may be agreed upon with the German national government in cases where the small number of branches makes a special German province seem inadvisable or where an historic or administratively proven provincial organisation should be permitted to continue.

Article 16

Before the Bishops take possession of their dioceses, they are to take an oath of fealty either to the national representative in the states, or the president of the Reich, respectively, according to the following formula:

"Before God and on the Holy Gospels I swear and promise—as becomes a bishop—loyalty to the German Reich and to the . . . state. I swear and promise to honour the constitutional government and to cause the clergy of my diocese to honour it. In the performance of my spiritual office and in my solicitude for the welfare and interest of the German State, I will try to avoid every detrimental act which might endanger it."

Article 17

The property and other rights of the public corporations, institutions, foundations and associations of the Catholic Church vested in their possessions are secured according to the general laws of the land. For no reason whatever may a building dedicated to public worship be torn down without the previous consent of the proper church authority.

Article 18

In case the State finds it necessary to abrogate the performance of obligations undertaken by it toward the Church, either based on law, agreement or special charter, the reasons for such abrogation should be discussed amicably with the Holy See before they are finally worked out, in order that a friendly agreement may be reached.

Traditional rights are to be considered as titles in law.

The abrogation must be compensated for by an equivalent to the claimant.

Article 19

The Catholic theological faculties in the state schools will remain. Their relation to the church authorities will be governed by the respective concordats and the terms set forth in the special closing addenda, and with due consideration of the rules of the Church in this connection. The national government will endeavour to secure a uniform set of regulations for all the Catholic faculties in Germany.

Article 20

The Church has the right, in so far as other agreements are not in existence, to establish theological and philosophical schools for the training of its clergy, these to be dependent solely on the church authorities, if no state subsidies are requested.

The establishment, management and administration of the theological seminaries, under the general limitations, of the civil code is exclusively the prerogative of the church authorities.

Article 21

Catholic instruction in the grammar, high, trade, and continuation schools is a regular part of the curriculum and is taught in accordance with the principles of the Catholic Church. It will be the special care of religious instruction to inculcate patriotic, civic and social consciousness and sense of duty in the spirit of the Christian faith and moral code, as is the case with the instruction in

other subjects. The syllabus and selection of textbooks for religious instruction will be arranged in consultation with the church authorities. The church authorities have the right to investigate whether the pupils are receiving religious instruction in accordance with the teachings and requirements of the Church, the opportunities for such investigation to be agreed upon with the school authorities.

Article 22

In the appointment of Catholic religious instructors an understanding will be arrived at between the Bishop and the state government. Teachers that have been declared unfit for further exercise of their teaching functions either because of their teachings or moral conduct, may not be employed as teachers of religion as long as the obstacle remains, in the judgment of the Bishop.

Article 23

The retention and establishment of Catholic schools remains secure. In all parishes in which parents request it, Catholic grammar schools will be established if the number of pupils and the general school situation in the community seem to justify a school run in accordance with the requirements of the State covering schools in general.

Article 24

In all Catholic grammar schools only such teachers will be employed as are members of the Catholic Church and guarantee the fulfilment of the special requirements of a Catholic School.

Within the general arrangements for the training of teachers, provisions will be made which will guarantee a training of Catholic teachers in accordance with the special requirements of the Catholic school.

Article 25

Conventual orders and religious communities are entitled to establish and conduct private schools, subject

to the general educational laws. These private schools, will have the same standing as the state schools in so far as they fulfill the curricular requirements for the latter.

For members of conventual orders or religious communities the general requirements for teachers and appointments to the grammar, continuation or high schools, are applicable.

Article 26

With reservations looking toward a later comprehensive regulation of the marriage laws, it is understood that except in cases of the critical illness of one of the engaged couple, or in the case of severe moral emergency, the presence of which must be confirmed by the proper church authority, the church marriage ceremony may precede the civil ceremony. In such cases the pastor is in duty bound to notify the registrar's office at once.

Article 27

The Church will accord to the German Army (Reichswehr) provision for the spiritual guidance of its officers, officials and personnel, as well as their families.

The administration of the pastoral care for the army is to be vested in the Army Bishop. His appointment is made by the Holy See after the latter has got into touch with the national government in order to select an appropriate candidate who is mutually agreeable.

The appointment of military pastors and other military clergymen will be made by the Army Bishop in concurrence with the proper national authority. The Army Bishop can appoint only such pastors as have the permission of the diocesan bishop to enter military religious service and have received a certificate to that effect. Military chaplains have the standing of regular pastors for the troops assigned to them, and for their personnel.

Detailed regulations for the organisation of the Catholic chaplains service will be laid down by an apostolic brief. The regulation of the official aspects of the chaplain's service will be arranged by the national government.

Article 28

In hospitals, prisons and other institutions of public benevolence the Church will have the right of visitation subject to the rules of the institutions. If regular ecclesiastical supervision is arranged for in such institutions, and if pastors must be appointed as state or other public officials, such appointments will be made in accord with the church authorities.

Article 29

The Catholic members of racial minorities living within the boundaries of Germany will be treated as regards the liberty of worship and instruction in their mother tongue, in accordance with the treatment received by German minorities in the respective country.

Article 30

On Sundays and holy days special prayers, conforming to the general liturgy, will be offered for the welfare of the German Reich, and its people, in episcopal, parish, and conventual churches and chapels.

Article 31

Such Catholic organisations and associations as serve a purely religious, cultural or charitable purpose, and as such are subject to the church authorities, will be protected in their establishments and activities.

Catholic organisations and associations which serve in addition to the religious, cultural or charitable purposes, social or professional objectives, shall, without prejudice to civil bodies of a similar character, enjoy the protection of Article XXXI, paragraph 1, in so far as they guarantee that their activity lies outside any political party.

The determination of the organisations and associations which fall under the terms of this article will be a matter of agreement between the national government and the German episcopate.

In so far as the Reich and the states sponsor athletic

or other young people's organisations, care will be taken that their members are enabled to fulfil their religious obligations on Sundays and holy days and that they are not encouraged to any acts not in accord with their religious and moral opinions and duties.

Article 32

In consideration of the special situation existing in Germany, and in view of guaranty provided by this Concordat of legislation which will safeguard the rights and privileges of the Roman Catholic Church in the nation and its component states, the Holy See will prescribe regulations which will prohibit clergymen and members of conventual orders from membership in political parties and from working on their behalf. (Cf. Supplementary Protocol.)

Article 33

All matters appertaining to clerical persons or ecclesiastical affairs which have not been treated in the foregoing articles will be treated according to canonical law.

Should differences of opinion arise regarding the interpretation of execution of any article of this Concordat, the Holy See and the German Reich will achieve a friendly solution in mutual agreement.

Article 34

This Concordat, whose German and Italian text shall have equal force, shall be ratified and the certificates of ratifications exchanged as soon as possible. It is in force from the day of such exchange.

It witness hereof, the plenipotentiaries have signed this Concordat.

Signed in two original exemplars, in the Vatican City, July 20th, 1933.

(Signed) EUGENIO, CARDINALE PACELLI

(Signed) FRANZ VON PAPEN

The Supplementary Protocol. At the signing of the Concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich the duly accredited plenipotentiaries have adjoined the following explanations, which form an integral part of the Concordat itself.

In re:

Article 3: The Apostolic Nuntius to the German Reich, in accordance with the exchange of notes between the Apostolic Nunciature in Berlin and the Foreign Office, on the 11th and 27th of March respectively, shall be the *Doyen* of the diplomatic corps in Berlin.

Article 13: It is understood that the church retains the right to levy church taxes (on its membership).

Article 14, Paragraph 2: It is understood that when objections of a general political nature exist, they shall be presented within the shortest possible time. If after 20 days, such statement has not been made, the Holy See will be justified in assuming that there are no objections to the candidate. The names of the persons in question will be held confidential until the announcement of the appointment. A State veto shall not be required to assign reasons.

Article 17: In so far as public buildings or properties are used for church purposes, these are retained, subject to existing agreements.

Article 19, Paragraph 2: This is founded at the time of the signing of this Concordat on the apostolic constitution: "Deus Scientiarum Dominus", of May 24th, 1931, and the Instruction of July 7, 1932.

Article 20: The high schools and colleges now under the administration of the Church are recognized as important church institutions *per se*, and as integral parts of the diocesan organisations.

Article 24: As soon as private institutions are able to meet the requirements of the new educational code for the training of teachers, the existing institutions of the conventual orders and communities will be given due consideration.

Article 26: A severe moral emergency exists when there are insuperable or disproportionately difficult and costly

obstacles in the way of securing the customary civil documents at the right time.

Article 27, Paragraph 1: Catholic officers, officials and personnel, as well as their families do not belong to the local parishes and do not contribute to their financial burdens.

Paragraph 4: The publication of the apostolic brief will take place after consultation with the national government.

Article 28: In urgent cases the pastor is to be admitted at all times.

Article 29: After the German government has indicated its willingness to the compromise regarding the non-German minorities, the Holy See declares,—pursuant to its principles regarding the right of employment of the mother tongue in religious instruction and in Catholic Societies,—that it will have in mind similar protective clauses for German minorities when arranging concordats with other countries.

Article 31, Paragraph 4: The principles laid down in this article hold good also for the national labour service.¹

Article 32: It is understood that similar provisions for non-participation in politics will govern members of other creeds also. The conduct enjoined upon the pastors and members of conventual orders in Germany does not entail any limitation of the prescribed preaching and interpretation of the dogmatic and moral teachings and principles of the Church.

In Vatican City, July 20th, 1933.

(Signed) EUGENIO, CARDINALE PACELLI,

(Signed) FRANZ VON PAPEN

¹Analogous to our forest camps for unemployed.

APPENDIX C

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

*To the Venerable Brothers, Archbishops and Bishops of Germany
and other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Holy See*

ON THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE GERMAN
EMPIRE

POPE PIUS XI

... **I**N YOUR COUNTRY, Venerable Brethren, voices are swelling into a chorus urging people to leave the Church, and among the leaders there is more than one whose official position is intended to create the impression that this infidelity to Christ the King constitutes a signal and meritorious act of loyalty to the modern State. Secret and open measures of intimidation, the threat of economic and civic disabilities, bear on the loyalty of certain classes of Catholic functionaries a pressure which violates every human right and dignity. Our whole-hearted paternal sympathy goes out to those who must pay so dearly for their loyalty to Christ and the Church; but directly the highest interests are at stake, with the alternative of spiritual loss, there is but one alternative left, that of heroism. If the oppressor offers one the Judas bargain of apostasy he can only, at the cost of every worldly sacrifice, answer with Our Lord: "Begone, Satan! For it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Mat. iv. 10.) And turning to the Church, he shall say: "Thou, my mother since my infancy, the solace of my life and advocate at my death, may my tongue cleave to my palate if, yielding to worldly promises or threats, I betray the vows of my baptism." As to those who imagine that they can reconcile exterior infidelity and interior fidelity to one

and the same Church, let them hear Our Lord's warning:—"He that shall deny me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." (Luke xii. 9.). . . .

You will need to watch carefully, Venerable Brethren, that religious fundamental concepts be not emptied of their content and distorted to profane use. "Revelation" in its Christian sense, means the word of God addressed to man. The use of this word for the "suggestions" of race and blood, for the irradiations of a people's history, is mere equivocation. False coins of this sort do not deserve Christian currency. "Faith" consists in holding as true what God has revealed and proposes through His Church to man's acceptance. It is "the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. ii. 1). The joyful and proud confidence in the future of one's people, instinct in every heart, is quite a different thing from faith in a religious sense. To substitute the one for the other, and demand on the strength of this, to be numbered among the faithful followers of Christ, is a senseless play on words, if it does not conceal a confusion of concepts, or worse.

"Immortality" in a Christian sense means the survival of man after his terrestrial death, for the purpose of eternal reward or punishment. Whoever only means by the term, the collective survival here on earth of his people for an indefinite length of time, distorts one of the fundamental notions of the Christian faith, and tampers with the very foundations of the religious concept of the universe, which requires a moral order.

"Original sin" is the hereditary but impersonal fault of Adam's descendants, who have sinned in him (Rom. v. 12). It is the loss of grace, and therefore of eternal life, together with a propensity to evil, which everybody must, with the assistance of grace, penance, resistance and moral effort, repress and conquer. The passion and death of the Son of God has redeemed the world from the hereditary curse of sin and death. Faith in these truths, which in your country are today the butt of the cheap derision of Christ's enemies, belongs to the inalienable treasury of Christian revelation.

The cross of Christ, though it has become to many a

stumbling block and foolishness (I Cor. i. 23) remains for the believer the holy sign of his redemption, the emblem of moral strength and greatness. We live in its shadow and die in its embrace. It will stand on our grave as a pledge of our faith and our hope in the eternal light.

Humility in the spirit of the Gospel and prayer for the assistance of grace are perfectly compatible with self-confidence and heroism. The Church of Christ, which throughout the ages and to the present day numbers more confessors and voluntary martyrs than any other moral collectivity, needs lessons from no one in heroism of feeling and action. The odious pride of reformers only covers itself with ridicule when it rails at Christian humility as though it were but a cowardly pose of self-degradation.

"Grace," in a wide sense, may stand for any of the Creator's gifts to His creature; but in its Christian designation, it means all the supernatural tokens of God's love; God's intervention which raises man to that intimate communion of life with Himself, called by the Gospel "adoption of the children of God". "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God" (I John iii. 1). To discard this gratuitous and free elevation in the name of a so called German type amounts to repudiating openly a fundamental truth of Christianity. It would be an abuse of our religious vocabulary to place on the same level supernatural grace and natural gifts. Pastors and guardians of the people of God will do well to resist this plunder of sacred things and this confusion of ideas.

Morality and Moral Order

It is on the faith in God, preserved pure and stainless, that man's morality is based. All efforts to remove from under morality and the moral order the granite foundation of faith and to substitute for it the shifting sands of human regulations, sooner or later lead these individuals or societies to moral degradation. The fool who has said in his heart "there is no God" goes straight to moral corruption (Ps. xiii. 1),

and the number of these fools who today are out to sever morality from religion, is legion. They either do not see or refuse to see that the banishment of confessional Christianity, i.e. the clear and precise notion of Christianity, from teaching and education, from the organization of social and political life, spells spiritual spoliation and degradation. No coercive power of the State, no purely human ideal, however noble and lofty it be, will ever be able to make shift for the supreme and decisive impulses generated by faith in God and in Christ. If the man, who is called to the hard sacrifice of his own ego to the common good, loses the support of the eternal and the divine, that comforting and consoling faith in a God who rewards all good and punishes all evil, then the result for the majority will be, not the acceptance, but the refusal of their duty. The conscientious observation of the ten commandments of God and the precepts of the Church (which are nothing but practical specifications of the rules of the Gospels) is for every one an unrivalled school of personal discipline, moral education and formation of character, a school that is exacting, but not to excess. A merciful God, who as Legislator, says—Thou must!—also gives by His grace the power to will and to do. To let forces of moral formation of such efficacy lie fallow, or to exclude them positively from public education, would spell religious under-feeding of a nation. To hand over the moral law to man's subjective opinion, which changes with the times, instead of anchoring it in the holy will of the eternal God and His commandments, is to open wide every door to the forces of destruction. The resulting dereliction of the eternal principles of an objective morality, which educates conscience and ennobles every department and organization of life, is a sin against the destiny of a nation, a sin whose bitter fruit will poison future generations.

Recognition of Natural Rights

Such is the rush of present-day life that it severs from the divine foundation of Revelation, not only morality, but also theoretical and practical rights. We are especially referring

to what is called the natural law, written by the Creator's hand on the tablet of the heart (Rom. ii. 14) and which reason, not blinded by sin or passion, can easily read. It is in the light of the commands of this natural law, that all positive law, whoever be the law-giver, can be gauged in its moral content, and hence, in the authority it wields over conscience. Human laws in flagrant contradiction with the natural law are vitiated with a taint which no force, no power can mend. In the light of this principle one must judge the axiom, that "right is common utility", a proposition which may be given a correct significance, it means that what is morally indefensible, can never contribute to the good of the people. But ancient paganism acknowledged that the axiom, to be entirely true, must be reversed and be made to say: "Nothing can be useful, if it is not at the same time morally good" (Cicero, *De Off.* iii. 30). Emancipated from this moral rule, the principle would in international law carry a perpetual state of war between nations; for it ignores in national life, by confusion right and utility, the basic fact that man as a person possesses rights he holds from God, and which any collectivity must protect against denial, suppression or neglect. To overlook this truth is to forget that the real common good ultimately takes its measure from man's nature, which balances personal rights and social obligations, and from the purpose of society, established for the benefit of human nature. Society was intended by the Creator for the full development of individual possibilities, and for the social benefits, which by a give and take process, every one can claim for his own sake and that of others. Higher and more general values, which collectivity alone can provide, also derive from the Creator for the good of man, and for the full development, natural and supernatural, and the realization of his perfection. To neglect this order is to shake the pillars on which society rests, and to compromise social tranquillity, security and existence.

The believer has an absolute right to profess his faith and live according to its dictates. Laws which impede this profession and practice of faith are against natural law.

Parents who are earnest and conscious of their educative duties, have a primary right to the education of the children God has given them in the spirit of their faith, and according to its prescriptions. Laws and measures which in school questions fail to respect this freedom of the parents go against natural law; and are immoral. The Church, whose mission it is to preserve and explain the natural law, as it is divine in its origin, cannot but declare that the recent enrolment into schools, organized without a semblance of freedom, is the result of unjust pressure, and is a violation of every common right.

To The Youth

As the Vicar of Him who said to the young man of the Gospel: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mat. xix. 17), We address a few paternal words to the young.

Thousands of voices ring into your ears a Gospel which has not been revealed by the Father of Heaven. Thousands of pens are wielded in the service of a Christianity, which is not of Christ. Press and wireless daily force on you productions hostile to the faith and to the Church, impudently aggressive against whatever you should hold venerable and sacred. Many of you, clinging to your faith and to your Church, as a result of your affiliation with religious associations guaranteed by the concordat, have often to face the tragic trial of seeing your loyalty to your country misunderstood, suspected, or even denied, and of being hurt in your professional and social life. We are well aware that there is many a humble soldier of Christ in your ranks, who with torn feelings, but a determined heart, accepts his fate, finding his one consolation in the thought of suffering insults for the name of Jesus (Acts v. 41). Today, as We see you threatened with new dangers and new molestations, We say to you: If any one should preach to you a Gospel other than the one you received on the knees of a pious mother, from the lips of a believing father, or through teaching faithful to God and His Church, "let him be anathema"

(Gal. i. 9). If the State organizes a national youth, and makes this organization obligatory to all, then, without prejudice to rights of religious associations, it is the absolute right of youths as well as of parents to see to it that this organization is purged of all manifestations hostile to the Church and Christianity. These manifestations are even today placing Christian parents in a painful alternative, as they cannot give to the State what they owe to God alone.

No one would think of preventing young Germans establishing a true ethnical community in a noble love of freedom and loyalty to their country. What We object to is the voluntary and systematic antagonism raised between national education and religious duty. That is why We tell the young: Sing your hymns to freedom, but do not forget the freedom of the children of God. Do not drag the nobility of that freedom in the mud of sin and sensuality. He who sings hymns of loyalty to his terrestrial country should not, for that reason, become unfaithful to God and His Church, or a deserter and traitor to His heavenly country. You are often told about heroic greatness, in lying opposition to evangelical humility and patience. Why conceal the fact that there are heroisms in moral life? That the preservation of baptismal innocence is an act of heroism which deserves credit? You are often told about the human deficiencies which mar the history of the Church: why ignore the exploits which fill her history, the saints she begot, the blessing that came upon western civilization from the union between that Church and your people? You are told about sports. Indulged in with moderation and within limits, physical education is a boon for youth. But so much time is now devoted to sporting activities, that the harmonious development of body and mind is disregarded, that duties to one's family, and the observation of the Lord's Day are neglected. With an indifference bordering on contempt the day of the Lord is divested of its sacred character, against the best of German traditions. But We expect the Catholic youth, in the more favourable organizations of the State, to uphold its right to a Christian sanctification of the

Sunday, not to exercise the body at the expense of the immortal soul, not to be overcome by evil, but to aim at the triumph of good over evil (Rom. xii. 21) as its highest achievement will be the gaining of the crown in the stadium of eternal life (1 Cor. ix. 24). . . .

We address Our special greetings to the Catholic parents. Their rights and duties as educators, conferred on them by God, are at present the stake of a campaign pregnant with consequences. The Church cannot wait to deplore the devastation of its altars, the destruction of its temples, if an education, hostile to Christ, is to profane the temple of the child's soul consecrated by baptism, and extinguish the eternal light of the faith in Christ for the sake of counterfeit light alien to the Cross. Then the violation of temples is nigh, and it will be every one's duty to sever his responsibility from the opposite camp, and free his conscience from guilty co-operation with such corruption. The more the enemies attempt to disguise their designs, the more a distrustful vigilance will be needed, in the light of bitter experience. Religious lessons maintained for the sake of appearances, controlled by unauthorized men, within the frame of an educational system which systematically works against religion, do not justify a vote in favour of non-confessional schools. We know, dear Catholic parents, that your vote was not free, for a free and secret vote would have meant the triumph of the Catholic schools. Therefore, We shall never cease frankly to represent to the responsible authorities the iniquity of the pressure brought to bear on you and the duty of respecting the freedom of education. Yet do not forget this: none can free you from the responsibility God has placed on you over your children. None of your oppressors, who pretend to relieve you of your duties can answer for you to the eternal Judge, when He will ask: "Where are those I confided to you?" May every one of you be able to answer: "Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one." (John xviii. 9). . . .

Sunday of Passion, March 14th, 1937.

APPENDIX D

SPEECH OF MINISTER KERRL

*on Saturday, February 13th, 1937, at 11 a.m. to the Presidents
of the Church Committees for the State and Provinces*

THE REICHS CHURCH Committee has resigned. On Monday a new law will be introduced. The Reichs Church Committee has not stuck to the lines which were prescribed for it. It was not intended that it should carry out a "Reformation", but its duty was to bring the Confessional Church and the "German Christians" round the same table. It was a pre-condition for its work that the primacy of the State over the Church should be recognised, and that the primary assumptions of the State, on which its work is based, should be regarded as taboo (*sic*). This has not been respected by Dr. Zoellner. Freedom of conscience ought to prevail for the pastors, but it must at the same time be the requisite freedom for all. Instead of this, the Reichs Church Committee has started a heresy campaign against the Thüringian "German Christians". It should not have made any such interference, Thuringia, Mecklenburg and Lübeck are in very good order. Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden are not in good order. The Reichs Church Committee should have treated the Confessional Church and the "German Christians" on an equal footing. Otherwise, it was allowing itself to be influenced from one side. It is, in fact, inwardly, under the influence of the Confessional Church.

It may be granted that the Reichs Church Committee honestly exerted itself. It has however recognised its own inadequacy and has therefore resigned. The new law will be based upon the previous Law for the Safeguarding of the Evangelical Church.

The same complaints are again and again being made about the Party, and about expressions used in the local branches of the Party. I declare these complaints to be

nonsense. Witness the inflammatory speech of the Pope against National Socialism to the German pilgrims who visited Rome. If a Catholic Bishop came to the Pope and said, "We want to do everything to create good relations with the State", then we would be much more inclined to listen to complaints. Our Party and our Führer want to have perfectly good relations with the Christian Confessions. We stick to the speeches of our Führer at Potsdam and elsewhere. But the Church must recognise the primacy of the State. That ought not to be difficult, as the Party expressly represents positive Christianity. Positive Christianity means a living Christianity. "Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," etc. "This is the first Commandment—thou shalt love the Lord thy God before all things," etc.

National Socialism has no other wish than to do the will of our Father in Heaven. The will of our Father in Heaven has been passed into our Blood; it works through the nation. Everything which National Socialism is now doing for the community, for the preservation of the nation, is the doing of the will of God. Our "neighbour" is he who is indicated to us by Blood.

It is not we who knock at the door of the Church, but Fate. It is not Adolf Hitler who has knocked at the door of the people, but Fate. Adolf Hitler was the instrument, and it was ordained by Fate that the German people had oil in its lamps, and so was ready to meet the Führer. If the Church realises this, then the Führer can get on all right with the Church. If, however, the Church wants to be a state within the State, then the Church will soon find itself standing alone and isolated. These are the principles which have got to be carried out, and the struggle to put them into practice will not be remitted.

These principles are fixed. They are based on the whole outlook of our Party. The fundamental principle is: the peoples are the handiwork of God. Imperialism and curialism are both in conflict with these principles, and with the nation. History shows, however, that the nation has survived by the will of God, and has become victorious.

The Papal Nuncio says, "We want no peoples". What

they want is one shepherd, the Pope, and one flock, the peoples. A further danger is the degradation and destruction of the peoples through bastardisation. The Jew is the instrument of bastardisation, as also of Communism. This tubercular bacillus must be insulated by us. This means hearkening to the Word of God. This means carrying out the will of God. The priests, indeed, say that Jesus is a Jew, and they speak of Paul the Jew, and say salvation comes from the Jews. That *won't* do! We must take steps that our children should be safeguarded from any risk of the Party being scoffed at in their presence. Christ must be taught according to the laws of our time and place. The proper relation must be brought about with our National-Socialistic people. The clergy must ask themselves whether the strained relations with the Party are not due to the nature of their own teaching. The content of their preaching must be altered. There is a saying of Pfleiderer's which I consider as most important: "God reveals himself in history, but dogmas are the work of men." Bishop von Galen and Dr. Zoellner wanted to bring home to me what Christianity really was, namely that it was a question of the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God. That is ridiculous, quite unessential. All that matters is to let the character of Jesus work upon one—to translate Christianity into action. In the course of history an *Apostolicum* has been built up. That the recognition of this *Apostolicum* should be a token of Christianity is nonsense. There has now arisen a new authority as to what Christ and Christianity really is. This new authority is Adolf Hitler. I do not want this to attribute divinity to Hitler. God speaks through men, through history, through living words. If this (which has been said before) had been recognised, there would have been no split between Christianity and National Socialism. All could have worked together to carry out the will of God, which is to secure the survival of our people. Therefore a way must be found to get away from the isolation and endangering of the German Evangelical Church.

I will not say that what has happened up till now was wrong. It was all right, in so far as the attempt had to be

made to give the Church an opportunity to put itself in order. It is my conviction that they have failed. There was no real inward change in the Church; only continued strife about outward shows, positions, etc. How is the goal to be reached? I have often discussed it with von Bodelschwingh. The idea of the "*Simultaneum*" came up. I shall not now set up any further governing body. It would be nonsense. We have the regional Churches. In 1933 the will of the people for a Reichs Church became manifest, but up till now it has not been possible to carry it out. On the contrary, the regional Churches have hardened themselves more and more. Spiritual leadership can only be set up when there is confidence and a unified will. There will therefore be no more Reichs Committee. Nor will I tolerate any other committee, as was set up in the Conference of Regional Church Leaders. There are now the regional Churches and nothing else. I recognise among them those of Thuringia, Hamburg, Lübeck, Mecklenburg, and Bremen. Those of Hamburg and Bremen I will arrange somewhat differently. Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden I will not recognise. Neither will I encroach upon them. The regional Church committees remain authorities for the Churches. The Church Ministry remains in my hand. . . . I will recognise no authority except those authorised by myself. The committees, without any exceptions, tend to take the side of the Confessional Church. They will, therefore, no longer be welcomed by all the Church-goers. What, therefore, shall happen to people who do not recognise the committees? Those who want to be free of the regional Churches may place themselves under the direct authority of the Church Ministry. That gives them freedom for a renewed struggle.

(Kerrl then explained "that such people should join together, and that these groups would be governed in agreement with the authorities". What he was referring to here appears to be the groups of "German Christians" in Thuringia and elsewhere. Translator.)

The groups will be under my authority. Under no circumstances will there be elections. Nor would they have any

success. It is nonsense to establish a governing body for groups who are not of one mind. The direction in which the Church is moving must first be made clear, if personal influence is to be made effective. By degrees the people will make its decision. There will be a struggle for Christianity on the Nationalist basis. Then National Socialism will find it possible to agree. Such a "*Simultaneum*" is only feasible when I retain for myself certain rights of organisation. Everything is being done to abolish the points of conflict, with a view to the maintenance of the German Evangelical Church. I must retain for myself the possibility to interfere in the business matters of the Church, for it spends yearly about 300 million marks. Church monies must not be used for revolts against the State. People who offer resistance to the State must no longer remain in the German Evangelical Church. I shall introduce procedure whereby the political decision can be made by State officials as regards any pastor. If a Church official makes any attack on our movement or on the State, then his right to be an official in a public legal organisation will be cancelled. In the same way, the right to constitute a public legal organisation can be cancelled for a parish or for the whole regional Church. The Church must be cleansed of scoundrels who place themselves in opposition to the State. It is intolerable when, for instance, Niemöller says at Dahlem: "Our Führer is the golden calf around which the people dance." Further, some of the regulations for officials will be henceforth applied to pastors. We will not tolerate any more Jews. Conditions of ordination for clergy must be modelled on the laws for the State. Six terms must be spent at the German Universities. The examinations will be arranged by the Faculties. By these arrangements peace will be secured, and the Party also will be satisfied. It will then be possible for the Church to engage upon a real struggle with the State and with National Socialism, which will lead to a genuine peace with the State. . . . Any discussion is unnecessary, as the laws are already in course of being printed, and will appear on Monday morning.

APPENDIX E

OPEN LETTER TO HERR KERRL
BY DR. DIBELIUS

Berlin, end of February 1937.

Herr Reichsminister Kerrl,

On February 13th you addressed the Presidents of the Church committees appointed by you. The speech is now known to the Evangelical Church of Germany. Its significance with respect to the relations between the Evangelical Church and your Ministry is much the same as what the *Sport Palast* Meeting of November 1933 signified in regard to the relations between us and the *Deutsche Christen*: the veil has been rent that has hitherto obscured the truth from many eyes; it is now perfectly clear to everyone what the Church Ministry has all along intended to do, and what its purpose now is in the days to come.

It is a matter of life and death—not only for the Evangelical Church but, as I firmly believe, for the entire people. In such circumstances it is the duty of every Christian to ask himself if something cannot be done to avert perhaps the worst of disasters. Conscious of my duty I am thus writing to you.

I cannot write a private letter. Your utterances were not of a private character, but were intended for publication throughout the Church. The Church therefore is entitled to hear the answer to your speech. I therefore write you an Open Letter in the assurance that you as Church Minister will understand and respect my reasons for doing so.

I assure you in advance that there is a widespread conviction in the German Evangelical Church of your sincere endeavours to bring about a proper understanding of the Christian Faith. For this reason these lines have been written.

Your speech was intended to explain the new regulations

concerning the Evangelical Church. The Führer's decision has made them null and void.

But this deals with a part of your speech only. There remains the other part in which you set forth the principles according to which you as Minister for Church Affairs believe you ought to act.

According to the report before me you stated: The Catholic Bishop Count Galen and the Evangelical *Superintendent* Zoellner had endeavoured to make you understand what Christianity is: that the matter concerns the affirmation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. That is absurd and of little account. The main thing is to allow the figure of Jesus to be an influence, and for the rest to practise Christianity in deeds. In the history of the Church an "*Apostolicum*" has been constructed. That the recognition of this "*Apostolicum*" should be the distinguishing mark of Christianity is absurd. Pfeiderer has said: "God reveals Himself in history; dogmas are the work of men".

The Evangelical Church has always known that dogmas are man's work, and that an outward affirmation of a creed does not always prove a person to be a sincere Christian. The question is only this—as to whether that which has been compiled by man and which in accordance with Evangelical principles must justify itself before God's Word, simply expresses the truth. The words that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not a doctrinal clause invented by man, but the fundamental principle of Holy Scripture. Our Faith depends on this teaching. It gives us support in life and comfort in death. In an age such as this, this teaching becomes the whole conception of Christianity. For if Jesus of Nazareth was a man like all of us, then anyone may criticise and alter His teaching. The sacraments of the Church would lose their meaning. The Church would no longer have the right to oppose Rosenberg's *Mythus* by holding up the Gospel as the eternal, unchangeable, true, Word of God. From the safe rock of God's revelation we should be thrust into the shifting sands of human opinions, and would stand there helpless at a time when new gods are being glorified.

No: the firm foundation of our Faith is that Jesus Christ, Who was crucified and Who rose again, is the Son of the living God.

What must "German Christendom" feel when the Minister for Church Affairs calls this absurd! Perhaps you know that in countless Evangelical Churches to-day, the congregations repeat on their own initiative the Apostles' Creed when the *Pfarrer* reads it at the Altar.

This has never been done before. Now congregations feel they must show the anti-Christian world that they are determined to hold fast to the Confession of Faith affirmed by their fathers.

What are they to say when the Minister for Church Affairs declares such an attitude to be absurd and at the same time prepares to take strong measures against the Church?

You have done more. You have ordered a change to be made in the sermons preached in the Evangelical Church. Not that they are to be more biblical than heretofore, no, but different and according to your ideas—which as the mention of Pfleiderer's name shows—are akin to the liberalism of the 19th century.

You have explained this more fully. You have said: the will of the Father which we are to fulfil according to the words of Jesus, has been given us in our blood.

The New Testament knows nothing of the will of God being given in blood. It only knows that everything that is in man is under the curse of selfishness. . . . The Evangelical pastor is bound by his ordination vows to preach nothing except "what is founded on God's clear Word as it is contained in the Old and New Testaments." . . . A pastor who would preach that the will of God is in our blood, would thereby break his ordination vows.

You have said: The priests say that Jesus is a Jew; they speak of the Jew, Paul, and say, salvation comes from the Jews. That is impossible!

I cannot remember that in the past these things were in any way emphasised in the sermons of the Evangelical

Church. But now ever since our enemies have directed their attacks against this point in particular, the Church has had to say: Yes, indeed, Jesus of Nazareth, as Man, is of the house of David, hence a Jew! The New Testament teaches us this quite clearly. No one has ever disputed the fact that St. Paul was a Jew. The Church cannot reject the Epistles of this Apostle without ceasing to be the Church of Jesus Christ. And that salvation comes from the Jews is to be found in St. John 4 as an utterance of Christ's to the Samaritan—certainly in a different sense from that intended by polemical writers hostile to our Church to-day.

You say it is impossible for German pastors to make such statements. When you do so, you mean you wish to forbid pastors saying what is contained in the New Testament. Our answer to this is, that an Evangelical pastor will only obey God's word and not man's with respect to what he preaches, and that if there should be a conflict, he will obey God rather than man.

It has been constantly asserted in the course of the last four years: the interference of the State concerns the external life of the Church only; no one would ever interfere with its teaching. The Confessional Church, on the other hand, has always said that this is not the case, but that Church politics which began with *Herr Jäger's* regime continued until the appointment of the *Reichs* Church committees, and signify interferences with teaching and preaching. For this reason, the Confessional Church refused to recognise the Church committees, as the government of the Church. Your words of 13th February have undoubtedly shown this to be so, and that the Confessional Church was right.

You wish sermons to be after the manner of the supporters of liberalism and of the Thuringian "German Christians". You make no suggestion, you give no advice, you simply make demands, and publish in the same breath new forcible measures to be taken against the Church.

If this does not signify interference in the teaching of the Church, then I know not what is to be understood by

interference. Here the Church will resist to the utmost and must resist.

Finally: you said that the Church always makes the same complaint against the Party and its utterances. You declared our protests to be absurd, when for instance, the Pope at the same time spoke against National Socialism to the pilgrims in Rome. You even added: we must see that the Party is not made an object of scorn in front of the children, when this and that is said in scripture lessons.

I will not enter into detail concerning the constant attacks on Christianity in the "Instruction Camps", and how distressing it is for every Evangelical Christian to hear that his protests are "absurd", because—the Pope delivered an address to the pilgrims in Rome! But with respect to the difference between religious instruction and "Party schooling", let me ask you one question: *Herr Reichsminister*! When in the morning children are told at school in their scripture lessons that the Bible is the Word of God speaking to us in the Old and New Testaments, and in the afternoon "Pimpfs" (small Hitler Youth boys) are told to remember and repeat: "Which is our Bible?" "Our Bible is Hitler's '*Mein Kampf*'!"—who has to change his teaching?

Here is the decisive point. When you demand that the Evangelical Church is not to be a State within the State, every Evangelical would agree. The Church is to be a Church, not a State in the State! Your principles, however, would make of the State a Church by determining sermons and creed by force. This is the root of the whole matter and of the struggle between the State and the Evangelical Church. The struggle will never come to an end until the State has realised its limits. Luther has said that we, loyal to God's Word, must serve the State, as long as it is a State, with body and life. Adolf Hitler's State too, can rely on the readiness of the Evangelical Christians of Germany. It would be unworthy if we were to assure him of that again in all solemnity. But the moment the State wishes to be the Church, and have power over the souls of men and over the preaching of the Church, we are, in accordance with

Luther's words, bound to offer resistance in God's name; and we shall most certainly do so.

What you have said, *Herr Reichsminister*, you have said. Nothing can be changed in that respect. There is only one way out of the muddle. The Evangelical Church must have the guarantee that what you have said is your private opinion; as such we should be prepared to respect it, but you must not force it upon the Church and determine the Church's policy in accordance with it. You must prove this in a way that cannot be misunderstood. Limit the functions of the Church Ministry so that as before it has simply general supervision over the Church in accordance with the constitutions of the Churches and the contract with the State. Refrain from further interference with the life of the Church, and restore to it the rights which it claims anew. . . . Leave the Church to manage its own affairs in real freedom and independence.

If this is done the Church struggle can be at an end in three months' time.

It is perfectly clear that the Thüringian *Deutsche Christen* will have to form a community by themselves, since in the opinion of all the Churches in the world, they can no longer claim the name of a Christian Church for themselves. If the State assists them no one will object. But the Evangelical Church, the Church of our fathers, must remain what it is: the Church in which is preached the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that the will of God speaks to us in Him as the Living Word; the Church that honours the Creed of its fathers and affirms the Confession of Faith in its services; the Church that preaches justification by faith; the Church that grants freedom of conscience to all because conviction and conscience cannot be forced. . . .

Set this our Evangelical Church free once more, give it liberty at last!

Germany has need of the Gospel! It has need of the unabridged and uncorrupted Gospel! Who helps here, will be blessed.

D. OTTO DIBELIUS.

APPENDIX F

MESSAGE OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE ON "LIFE AND WORK" TO GERMAN EVANGELICALS

ON THE MOTION of the Bishop of Chichester, supported by the Archbishop of Thyateira, Dr. W. Adams Brown, of New York, and by a representative of France, the following message from the conference "to their brethren in the Evangelical Church in Germany" was adopted *nem. con.*:

The representatives of Christian Churches, assembled at Oxford from all parts of the world, mourn the absence of their brethren in the German Evangelical Church, with whom they have been closely bound both in the preparations for this conference and in the great tasks which are set before the Universal Church.

i. We welcome the fact that an agreement had been reached that a common delegation of the German Evangelical Church should be sent to Oxford; we therefore miss the more the great help which its members would have given in the treatment of the fundamental questions of our time. But though your delegates are absent, the very circumstances of their absence have created a stronger sense of fellowship than before.

ii. We are greatly moved by the afflictions of many pastors and laymen who have stood firm from the first in the Confessional Church for the sovereignty of Christ, and for the freedom of the Church of Christ to preach His gospel.

iii. We note the gravity of the struggle in which not your Church alone but the Roman Catholic Church as well is engaged, against distortion and suppression of Christian witness, and for the training of the young in a living faith in Jesus Christ as Son of God, and King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

iv. We remember the words of the Scriptures: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling"; "If one member suffer all the members suffer with it, or one member is honoured all the members rejoice with it"; so we, your brethren in other Churches, are one with our suffering brethren in the German Evangelical Church in love and prayer. Your Lord is our Lord, your faith our faith, your baptism our baptism. We are moved to a more living trust ourselves by your steadfast witness to Christ, and we pray that we may be given grace in all our Churches to bear the same clear witness to the Lord.

v. We pray God to bless you, and to guide and comfort you in your afflictions; and we call upon the Churches throughout the world to make intercession for you with our Father in Heaven, and to rejoice that once again it has been proved that a faith born of sacrifice is counted worthy of sacrifice.

APPENDIX G

THE GREETING OF THE EDINBURGH
CONFERENCE ON "FAITH AND
ORDER" TO THE CONFSSIONAL
CHURCH, SENT ON AUGUST 12, 1937

"WE ARE SINCERELY grateful for your greetings and good wishes. We lament profoundly your absence from this Conference. We appreciate to the full the greatness of the loss which this has involved for our work. We deeply sympathize with your Church in the troubles that beset it. We are in one heart with all suffering Christians in your land. We reverence the constancy and courage of your witness. We pray that God will speedily grant you happy issue out of all your afflictions and make them fruitful in triumph of the Christian Faith."

This message was approved unanimously and carried with tumultuous applause.

APPENDIX H

A GERMAN CHRISTIAN CONFIRMATION SERVICE

A CONFIRMATION WAS held under the auspices of the National Church of German Christians by Dr. Schairer on March 20 at the *Schlosskirche*, in Stuttgart. Dr. Schairer gave an address and a verse of a song. Afterwards he asked those who were to be confirmed four questions, to which they responded in chorus. The verse was as follows: God is Love; Love your Neighbour; Keep the Blood pure; Be true to the Folk. Then the Confirmation candidates advanced to the altar in pairs, where they were given their mottoes. None of these mottoes was taken from the Bible. One young lad received the word "Being afraid is no good!" another "Up the Flags, which keep the ranks close". A girl received "Our business in the world is not to be happy, but to make happy". Another girl "Father we shall not renounce Thee. Thou art our Home and Peace, eternal life here below. Hearken when all betray us".

*Allgemeine Evangelische-Lutheranische
Kirchenzeitung*, March 31, 1938

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